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Spring 2005

Volume 9, Number 1

# Alternative Press REVIEW

**YOUR GUIDE BEYOND THE MAINSTREAM**



**Stop the Massacres in Iraq! Bring the Murderers Home!**

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The Failure of Empire ♦ The Noose Tightens ♦  
Powerdown: Options and Actions for a Post-Carbon World  
♦ Stencil Pirates ♦ Tre Arrow Interview ♦ The Ghosts of  
9/11: Reflections on History, Justice and Roosting Chickens



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## EDITORIAL

# Stop the Massacres in Iraq! Bring the Murderers Home!

**T**he U.S.-led invasion of Iraq has been met with steadily strengthening resistance. Amazingly, for a people who have long suffered under the curse of Western "influence," even those Iraqis who are not participants in or supporters of direct attacks on the U.S./U.K. occupation forces and its mercenary adjuncts have one key demand: the end of occupation and the removal of all occupation forces.

The Iraqis have already had the misfortune of being used as pawns for decades in the projection of U.S. (and previously U.K.) military power in the region. Saddam Hussein was groomed, advised and materially supported in his most ruthless and bloody campaigns throughout most of his career by U.S. intelligence and military forces with the direct backing of multiple U.S. presidents. In the war encouraged by U.S. and Israeli strategists between Iraq and Iran—following the overthrow of the U.S.-installed Shah in Iran—millions of people lost their lives. The populations of both countries suffered devastating destruction and immense losses that were encouraged and facilitated by U.S. ambitions to punish and weaken Iran (for slipping out of U.S. control) at the same time as Hussein was manipulated in order to weaken Iraq.

Once Saddam Hussein was no longer a useful U.S. puppet (after he took a few too many liberties with Kuwait, thinking he had the tacit support of April Glaspie and the rest of the Bush I regime), the Iraqi people again suffered. Over a period of weeks more than 100,000 Iraqi troops were killed in what was at the time aptly described as a "turkey shoot" by massive amounts of high-tech superpower weaponry aimed at a relatively small, defenseless country. Many thousands of Iraqi troops were massacred—while fleeing after abandoning their own weapons—by cowardly U.S. pilots who rained death from the air. Thousands of entrenched Iraqi troops were also buried alive in the sand by U.S. Army bulldozers with no chance to surrender offered. In cities throughout Iraq, thousands of civilians were disposed of as "collateral damage" in the mostly indiscriminate air attacks using so-called "smart" weapons wielded to instill "democratic" mass terror. Those who managed to survive the initial attacks faced mass illness, misery and often shortened lives following the deliberate destruction of urban sanitation systems, water purification plants, and health-care infrastructure—war crimes all.

A decade of U.S.-orchestrated and imposed sanctions against Iraqis followed the first Gulf War massacres. As has been repeated many times, well over half a million children died as a result of these sanctions, to the satisfaction of U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who infamously declared that these half million deaths were "worth the price" in a nationally televised interview. No U.S. administration spokesperson of any rank ever dissented from this Nazi-like evaluation. Nor did any of the subsequent U.S. administrations during these years waver from their determination to put pressure on Saddam Hussein by tormenting and immiserating the entire population

of Iraq, a policy which indirectly killed the weakest and least able to defend themselves by the tens of thousands.

In order to gain enough popular support within the U.S. (while failing to gain significant support around the rest of the world) to launch a renewed round of massacres in Iraq, George Bush II and his entire administration (with British Prime Minister Tony Blair playing the role of cheerleader) lied repeatedly and loudly about the infamous "Weapons of Mass Destruction" in Iraq. We were told these weapons were a direct and immediate threat to the people of the U.S. and the U.K., except for the fact that they obviously don't exist anywhere besides in the imaginations of the leaders, propagandists and their lackeys in both countries. After the lies were repeated several million times by slavishly complicit mainstream media, the new invasion was launched to the cheers of successfully indoctrinated masses. Of course, it was also launched to the jeers of tens of millions who understood too well what was happening. They opposed the war and refused to be fooled, but their voices were extinguished by those same complicit mass media.

Almost two years after the latest invasion the ongoing daily massacres, bombings, mass kidnappings (called "round-ups" or "arrests") of civilians and random murders continue at the hands of U.S. forces and their mercenary adjuncts. One would never know through the U.S. mass media that since the latest invasion at least 80% of the (non-natural) deaths in Iraq have been administered by U.S. forces. Although the exact number of deaths in a country beset by massacres large and small can't be known for certain, the only significant survey, reported recently in the respected British medical journal, *The Lancet*, estimates that 100,000 civilians have been killed in Iraq since the U.S. invasion in 2003, most exterminated by U.S. aerial attacks.

The U.S. Deputy Operations Director for U.S.-led forces in Iraq stated in January: "If you look over the last six months, they have steadily escalated the barbaric nature of the attacks they have been committing." He was speaking of the Iraqi resistance, of course, and not of the horrors inflicted by the so-called "precision" attacks that have been launched over and over again against targets which have turned out to include women, children, and the elderly along with plenty of civilian men. For the U.S. press the horrific nature of these attacks doesn't exist. Millions of dead as a direct or indirect result of U.S./U.K. manipulation, funding, arming, bombardment, massacre and terrorism of civilians are ignored.

It is up to the alternative press to remind the people of the U.S. about the true nature of the massive war crimes that have been and continue to be perpetrated in the name of Western-style democracy, and the American and British Peoples.

Stop the Massacres in Iraq! Bring the Murderers Home!

**Jason McQuinn**  
**Allan Antliff**  
**Thomas Wheeler**



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*"The whirligig of time has its revenges."*

-B.A.G. Fuller

# Alternative Press Notes

Welcome to the new issue of *Alternative Press Review*! APR is back in print after a two year absence! We want to reconnect with many of our regular readers from the past and we seek to add many new readers in the future. For those of you who are discovering APR for the first time, it is an independent magazine of reviews and reprints from the liberatory side of the alternative press. Published quarterly, APR seeks to promote the alternative and radical press as well as other alternative and radical media. APR features both full-length essays and a selection of article excerpts in each issue, along with original coverage of alternative media issues, institutions and personalities.

Beginning with this issue, Allan Antliff has joined the editorial and production collective. He joins me and the original editor, Jason McQuinn, in our effort to publish a lively and provocative magazine that isn't afraid to chal-

lenge and expose the lies and propaganda of the mainstream media.

While the cost of publishing has increased over the years we are not raising the cost of subscriptions, which haven't changed since the magazine's inception in 1993. We strongly encourage those who wish to provide extra support to consider becoming a sustaining contributor by donating \$100 a year. Besides a one-year subscription, sustainers will also receive books offered through A.A.L. Press and the brand new *Alternative Press Review* t-shirt. T-shirts can also be purchased at our web site. We also encourage one-time donations to help re-establish this project. The success of this magazine will depend in part on you—our readers and supporters.

We are also offering complete sets of back issues (#1 - #18) for a special price of only \$40. Get them while they last! If you would like extra copies of the current issue please consider our bundle special. We will send you 10

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Library/institutional rate is \$24/year.

Subscriptions for prisoners are \$8/year by third class & \$12/year internationally by surface mail.

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Sample copies of the current issue or copies of back issues are available for \$5.00 each (\$6.00 each by first class mail).

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Please keep in mind that if you move to a new address, you need to notify us at least 6 weeks

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copies of the current issue for only \$25, 20 copies for \$40, 50 copies for \$75, or 100 copies for only \$100. Use the form on page 67 to place your orders.

During the absence of the print publication, APR continued as a web-based journal providing our readers with a broad selection of articles, editorials, analysis and investigative reports from a diverse range of alternative, radical, and independent press sources. We will continue to provide web-only features and encourage readers to visit the APR web site ([www.altpr.org](http://www.altpr.org)) on a regular basis. To keep up with the latest news, analysis, information and updates we encourage you to subscribe to the free APR email list. Visit our web site to sign up.

In this issue Allan Antliff interviews Mynah Meagher and Ben Shannon of the Tre Arrow Defense Committee, the editors of *Monthly Review* analyze the prospect of a significant defeat in Iraq for the United States in "The Failure of Empire," Derrick Jensen and George Draffan show how modern technologies are contributing to a repressive surveillance society in "The Noose Tightens," Richard Heinberg looks at the alarming ecological and economic prospects for the planet in "Powerdown," and Josh MacPhee examines the history of street art stencils in "Stencil Pirates."

With the raging controversy surrounding Ward Churchill's three and a half year old essay, "Some People Push Back: On the Justice of Roosting Chickens," APR has decided to run an expanded version of this piece which appears in Churchill's most recent book from AK Press (see page 45 for more details). The APR editors oppose the reactionary witch-hunt against Churchill and the biased establishment media coverage which has gone to great lengths to grossly distort his analysis and to avoid any real discussion of what he actually said. We are presenting Churchill's essay so APR readers can decide for themselves whether

# christian angst by terry everton

Hey students...It's time for another exciting course in *What Compulsory Education Really Teaches Us!*

Say...I bet I'll do better in the workplace if I forego practicing all that silly *critical reasoning stuff!*



1. Successful people do as they're told.

That's right, kids...If you don't memorize and regurgitate this nonsensical crap I'm filling your brains with, *I'll flunk your ass and doom you to a life of low wage manual labor!*



2. If you do as you're told, you'll be successful.

Congratulations, Biff...You've demonstrated an uncanny knack for not producing one original thought the entire time you've been here!



Hey, I didn't get good grades *by thinking for myself*, you know!



Churchill's arguments merit support or not.

The front and back cover of this issue features the art of Brian P. We encourage readers to check out his web site at [www.artofbrianp.com](http://www.artofbrianp.com) for more samples of his work.

We're sure you'll be pleased with the return of the magazine. We are happy to be back! — *Thomas Wheeler*

**Alternative Press Review  
has a new address:**

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## Fired Reporters Challenge Fox TV License

Steve Wilson and Jane Akre charge Fox with false and distorted news reports.

**F**or what is believed to be the first time ever, two television journalists have challenged the broadcast license of a station on grounds it deliberately broadcast false and distorted news reports.

Veteran reporters Jane Akre and Steve Wilson filed the petition Monday against WTVT Fox-13, in Tampa, a unit of Rupert Murdoch's Fox Television empire.

The formal Petition To Deny the station's pending license renewal presents the Federal Communications Commission with 98 pages of what the journalists say is "clear and convincing support for the claim that the licensee is not operating in the public interest and lacks the good character to do so."

The challenge stems from what the reporters say was a year-long experience inside the station, where they resisted Fox managers who repeatedly ordered them to distort a series of news reports about the secret use of an artificial hormone injected in dairy cattle throughout Florida and beyond.

The claim also cites another case of alleged deliberate distortion at the Fox-owned television station in Kansas City, WDAF Fox-4.

The journalists charge that WTVT has violated federal rules with regard to keeping on file viewer complaints and comments. The reporters say not one communication regarding the dispute over the hormone story was found in the files even though there were several examples of letters which should have been there.

"There are no greater supporters of the First Amendment than Steve and I," Akre said. "But the First Amendment is certainly not a license to lie and no broadcaster should be allowed to put its own financial interests ahead of the public interest.

The public interest is by law the primary obligation of every broadcaster who uses our public airwaves to make their corporate fortune, especially when broadcasting the news."

"The FCC itself has clearly said 'rigging or slanting the news is a most heinous act against the public interest and indeed, there is no act more harmful to the public's ability to handle its affairs,' and who can disagree?" Wilson added.

**In 1998, the two filed a civil court lawsuit seeking employee protections under the state Whistleblower Act that resulted in a \$425,000 jury award to Akre. That verdict was then overturned in 2003 when an appeals court accepted Fox's defense that since it is not technically against any law, rule, or regulation for a broadcaster to distort the news, the journalists were never entitled to employee protections as whistleblowers in the first place.**

The reporters charge station executives demanded the reports be falsified and slanted to avoid a threatened lawsuit by the hormone maker Monsanto, as well as potential loss of advertising from dairy men and others who objected to the reports.

Though Fox officials never pointed to a single inaccuracy in the proposed broadcasts, they nonetheless fired the two after the reporters refused to yield to management threats of dismissal. The two also refused what they characterized as a six-figure offer of hush-money from station

managers who wanted them to leave and forever keep quiet about the issue.

In 1998, the two filed a civil court lawsuit seeking employee protections under the state Whistleblower Act that resulted in a \$425,000 jury award to Akre. That verdict was then overturned in 2003 when an appeals court accepted Fox's defense that since it is not technically against any law, rule, or regulation for a broadcaster to distort the news, the journalists were never entitled to employee protections as whistleblowers in the first place.

Although Fox has always denied it ever ordered deliberate distortions, the jury found the reports at the heart of the dispute were "false, distorted, or slanted." While the appellate court ruling that reversed the jury called the journalists' suit "without merit from its inception," that finding was based solely upon the court's finding on the threshold issue that the Whistleblower law did not apply in this particular case. No court has ever disputed the jury's conclusions about the news reports themselves.

"The public expects the FCC to exercise its authority on complaints of indecency on the public airwaves, and it has in cases like Janet Jackson and here locally with Bubba The Love Sponge. Certainly no less important is the public's expectation that the airwaves they own will not be used to lie and mislead them on issues of public importance," Wilson said.

"Steve and I are gratified that six disinterested people who spent more than a month reviewing the facts ultimately agreed the story Fox demanded was, as the jurors determined, 'false, distorted or slanted.'

"As we said in our Petition, we are not seeking to retry our whistleblower case at the FCC. We are doing what we said all along that we have a duty to do: bring the facts of Fox's misconduct to the attention of a federal regulatory agency that long ago promised it would act to protect the



public interest against broadcasters who twist the truth in news reports," she said.

"Reporters seldom if ever speak out against the news organization that employs them. I'm proof that doing so is not the best path to career advancement—but what happened here was too egregious for any honest journalist to ignore," Akre said.

"And now, with the strongest, clearest, and best-documented case of news distortion ever presented to the FCC by newsroom insiders, we call upon the Commissioners to exercise their authority to assure the public is being well-served and not misled," Wilson said.

The petition seeks a full and thorough investigation by the FCC followed by public hearings on the matter before any determination is made to renew WTVT's license to operate the station for the next eight years. — *Steve Wilson*

FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
[www.foxbghsuit.com](http://www.foxbghsuit.com)

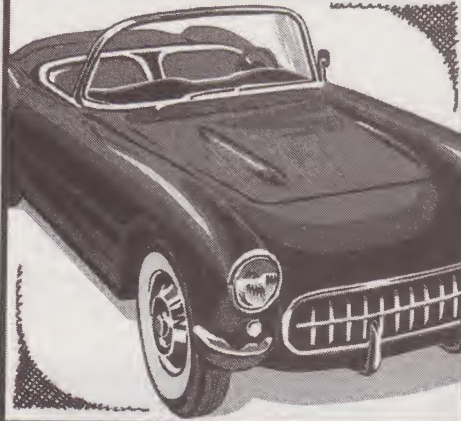
## Western media guilty of deception

In February, The World Tribunal on Iraq (WTI), a worldwide peoples initiative seeking the truth about the war and occupation of Iraq, declared much of the Western corporate media guilty of deception and incitement to violence in its reporting on Iraq. The tribunal came to this conclusion after taking testimony from independent journalists, media professors, and activists.

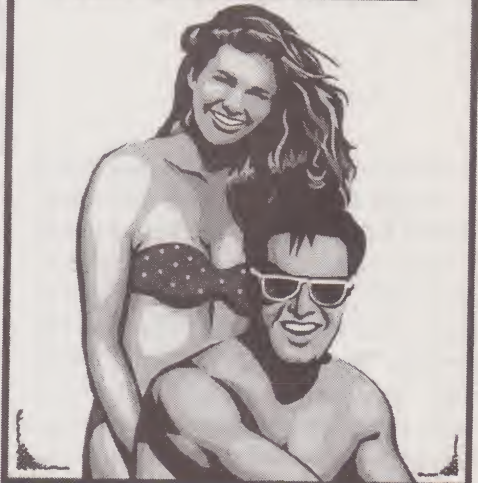
The panel also accused the United States and the British governments of deliberately engaging in disinformation and endangering independent journalists. Some activists and independent media personnel have accused the United States of deliberately targeting journalists. More

## christian angst by terry everton

Thanks to the miracle of modern media, we're given clear guidelines as to what we should drive...



How much we should weigh...



Where we should live...



And how we should think.

See, Honey...If you close your eyes hard enough, you can actually make those awful poor people disappear!



journalists have been killed in Iraq than in the entire Vietnam war.

According to one press account, Dr. Tony Alessandrini, a human rights activist who helped organize the WTI declared, "This is not simply an exercise to denounce the mainstream media for their bias and incompetence ... but rather the active complicity of media in crimes that

have been committed and are being committed on a daily basis against the people in Iraq."

Media Lens, a British-based watchdog group, declared: "As long as journalists continue to submit to this oppression of the human spirit, they will continue to be complicit in the gravest imaginable crimes against humanity."



# Bits & Pieces

By Thomas Wheeler

*"Any dictator would admire the uniformity and obedience of the U.S. media." — Noam Chomsky*

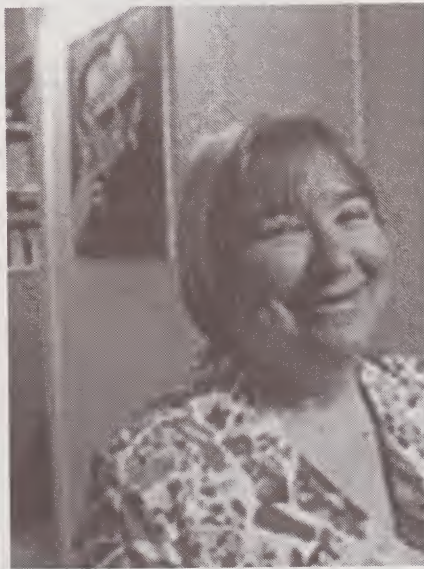
## Soviets 'R' US

A recent study by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation found that a substantial number of America's high school students approve of government censorship of the press. The two-year \$1 million study of 100,000 high school students entitled, "The Future of the First Amendment," found that nearly half of America's high school students think the press should get government approval of content before publishing stories and nearly a third believe free speech protections go too far. A number of experts and commentators have pointed out that many schools have failed to encourage critical thinking skills. But the results of this study shouldn't be much of a surprise. The real purpose of state schooling has never been about encouraging creativity or critical thinking but rather obedience and subordination. Industry requires docile, conformist workers who are punctual and follow orders. Schools were designed largely to help produce workers who are submissive to authority. As John Taylor Gatto points out, "People who conform are predictable, and this is of great use to those who wish to harness and manipulate a large labor force." Given the obvious obedience of the mainstream media in the United States, this statement aptly applies to the journalism profession as well.

## Targeting Dissent

To those who are not properly submissive, unimaginative, and obedient cogs in the machine, the case of New York attorney Lynne Stewart is instructive. Stewart, a 65 year old radical activist and civil rights

lawyer who has defended the poor and marginalized as well as high profile cases involving the Weather Underground to Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, was found guilty of providing support for terrorism. She faces up to 30 years in prison. Stewart never engaged in or planned any terrorist



Lynne Stewart

activity and no act of terrorism was ever alleged to have resulted from her actions. However, the government claimed Stewart abetted terrorism by making Rahman's words available to the outside world when she provided a press release to *Reuters News Service* in Egypt. Allowing the words of her client to be heard in public was deemed a terrorist act by the government. During the trial Stewart was demonized as a traitor and her political views were attacked. Threats, harassment, intimi-

dation, and punishment are the tools that can be used to silence those who do not properly fall in line. It is also meant to provide a warning to others who dare dissent. For more info: [www.lynnestewart.org](http://www.lynnestewart.org)

## Targeting Journalists

Were journalists who refused to be in bed with the military and serve as lapdogs for the Pentagon PR machine deliberately targeted and killed in Iraq? At the World Economic Forum in Switzerland, CNN news executive Eason Jordan allegedly claimed U.S. troops targeted and killed a dozen journalists. This caused an uproar and Jordan quickly backpedaled from this statement—but not enough to prevent his ouster at CNN. While the mainstream media effectively dismissed and minimized such accusations, there is certainly evidence to support the allegation that some journalists were threatened and targeted. In March of 2003, then Pentagon PR-flack Victoria Clarke, declared that journalists not properly embedded with the military were "at risk." The risks were made clear when the US military fired at a hotel serving as the main residence for non-embedded journalists, killing two of them. Another journalist was killed when the US bombed Al-Jazeera headquarters in Iraq. The Al-Jazeera office in Afghanistan was also bombed. Shortly before the invasion, a BBC correspondent reported that Pentagon officials told her that any satellite uplinks would be fired on. ITN's Terry Lloyd and his team were killed by U.S. soldiers despite driving in a clearly marked TV vehicle. The embed process was part of a military strategy to keep the media in line. Those journalists not sufficiently under the control of the Pentagon were "at risk" — and a few paid with their lives.

## Executing Journalists for Treason

Not content to target journalists in Iraq, Tony Blankley of the *Washington Times* thinks investigative reporter Seymour Hersh should be jailed and face execution for espionage. Hersh's specific crime is



publishing an expose on the Bush administration's covert operations inside Iran and detailing plans and possible preparations for war with Iran. Commissar Blankley advocates the curtailing of civil liberties, the expansion of state power, and thinks the media should fall in line and be a more dependent servant to the executive branch.

### Serious Declines in Recruitment

The all-volunteer military is in trouble. In February 2005, the U.S. Army badly missed its goal of shipping 7,050 people off to boot camp. They could only muster 5,114 recruits, 27% short of its goal. The Marine Corps also missed its goal for recruits in the months January and February 2005. In December of 2004, the Army National Guard announced it had fallen 30% below its recruiting goals. The National Guard and Army Reserve currently comprise about 40% of the nearly 150,000 troops in Iraq.

Increasingly aggressive recruitment efforts and increased monetary incentives and bonuses have yet to make a dent in the plummeting numbers of recruits. To make up for the loss of new boots, the Pentagon has resorted to "stop loss" measures, sometimes referred to as a "back-door draft," to force current military personnel to remain on active duty indefinitely.

The chief of the Army Reserve, Lt. Gen. James Helmly provided some additional welcome news when he warned that the Army Reserve is in "precipitous decline" and is "rapidly degenerating into a broken force." Some conservative defense experts and politicians are increasingly alarmed by the strain on troops and a Pentagon advisory board recently concluded that the military was too small to meet the global aspirations of American Empire.

While not explicitly calling for a draft, several military officers and a number of neo-conservative members of the Project for a New American Century, wrote a letter to Congressional leaders calling for a substantial increase in U.S. ground forces. With falling recruiting numbers, there is simply no way to substantially increase these numbers without instituting a draft.





## Leslie Gelb asks Iraq: Who's your Daddy?

By Mickey Z.

**L**eslie H. Gelb is president emeritus of the Council on Foreign Relations. As a former editor and columnist for *The New York Times*, however, he transforms into the Amazing Gelbo and gets to spout his ill-informed paeans to denial on that paper's op-ed page. February 2, 2005 saw the publication of a little something called "The Lessons of 1787," in which Gelbo waxed poetic about the "truly heartwarming effects of Sunday's (Iraqi) elections." He reminded us: "Elections decide who is to govern" but warned that only a Constitution can "define the reach and limits of electoral power, and the viability and legitimacy of a government."

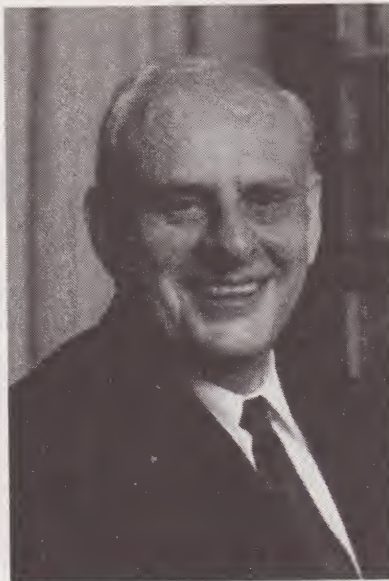
The new Iraqi National Assembly, says Gelbo, "should forgo drafting the constitution and establish a special constitutional committee" that engages "Iraq's James Madisons and Ben Franklins" (I'm not making this up). That's where the whole 1787 thing comes into play. Iraq needs to follow in America's footsteps (then again, doesn't everyone?) It's as if Gelbo was asking those poor Iraqis: "Who's your daddy?" because, as we all know, you ain't nothing without Founding Fathers(tm).

The year 1787 saw a certain Daniel Shays arrested, thus this op-ed reminded me of a lesson about constitutions that the Amazing Gelbo neglected to reference.

"When Massachusetts passed a state constitution in 1780, it found few friends among the poor and middle class, many of them veterans from the Continental Army still waiting for promised bonuses," explains historian Kenneth C. Davis. To add to this decidedly non-support-the-troops mentality, excessive property taxes were combined with polling taxes designed to prevent the poor from voting. "No one could hold state office without being quite wealthy," Howard Zinn adds. "Furthermore, the legislature was refusing

to issue paper money, as had been done in some other states, like Rhode Island, to make it easier for debt-ridden farmers to pay off their creditors."

Perhaps heeding the advice of Thomas Jefferson that "a little rebellion" is necessary, Massachusetts farmers fought back when their property was seized due to lack



Leslie Gelb

of debt repayment. Armed and organized, their ranks grew into the hundreds. Local sheriffs called out the militia...but the militia sided with the farmers. The Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts indicted eleven members of the rebellion. Those who had so recently fomented revolt were no longer tolerant of such insurrection.

Enter Daniel Shays: Massachusetts farmer and former Army captain. He chose not to stand by idly as battle lines were being drawn and friends of his faced imprisonment. In September 1786, Shays led an army of some 700 farmers, workers, and veterans into Springfield. "Onetime radical Sam Adams, now part of the Boston

Establishment, drew up a Riot Act," says Davis, "allowing the authorities to jail anyone without a trial." Shays' army swelled to more than 1000 men.

Writing from Paris, Jefferson offered tacit approval for, at least, the concept of rebellion. Closer to home, the American aristocracy was less than pleased. Sam Adams again: "In monarchy, the crime of treason may admit of being pardoned or lightly punished, but the man who dares rebel against the laws of a republic ought to suffer death."

In a classic shape-of-things-to-come scenario, Boston merchants pooled money to raise an army to be led by General Benjamin Lincoln, one of George Washington's war commanders. Clashes were fierce but the outnumbered rebels were on the run by winter. Most were killed or captured. Some were hanged while others, including Shays, were eventually pardoned in, yes, 1787.

Within a year, a penniless Shays was dead. In other words, the government took from the poor to give to the rich and anyone with the audacity to protest was brutally put down.

Now, there's a lesson most Iraqis have learned the hard way.

And speaking of putting down protest and how it might pertain to our beloved Founding Fathers(tm), there's the recent issue of Ward Churchill. The longtime activist and author is now the poster child for "we like free speech and all but you've dang gone too far, red man" crowd.

As Ward has meticulously documented, the history of repressing dissent in America goes back almost as far as the Amazing Gelbo's lessons...all the way to the Alien and Sedition Act of 1798. In section two, this Ashcroftian piece of legislation reads:

"If any person shall write, print, utter or publish, or shall cause or procure to be written, printed, uttered or published, or shall knowingly and willingly assist or aid in writing, printing, uttering or publishing any false, scandalous and malicious writing or writings against



# Counterterrorism in the Newsroom: Mobilizing Against an Orwellian System of Definitions

By Mærk Hand

the government of the United States, or either house of the Congress of the United States, or the President of the United States, with intent to defame the said government, or either house of the said Congress, or the said President, or to bring them, or either of them, into contempt or disrepute; or to excite against them, or either or any of them, the hatred of the good people of the United States, or to stir up sedition within the United States, or to excite any unlawful combinations therein, for opposing or resisting any law of the United States, or any act of the President of the United States, done in pursuance of any such law, or of the powers in him vested by the constitution of the United States, or to resist, oppose, or defeat any such law or act, or to aid, encourage or abet any hostile designs of any foreign nation against United States, their people or government, then such person, being there of convicted before any court of the United States having jurisdiction thereof, shall be punished by a fine not exceeding two thousand dollars, and by imprisonment not exceeding two years."

President John Adams signed the bill into law and soon after, Americans were put in jail for criticizing their government. The Amazing Gelbo might call this "heartwarming," but in solidarity with Ward Churchill and so many others persecuted for not toeing the party line, it's high time we learn some new lessons.

Mickey Z. is the author of "The Seven Deadly Spins: Exposing the Lies Behind War Propaganda" (Common Courage Press, 2004) and can be found on the Web at [www.mickeyz.net](http://www.mickeyz.net).

When segments of the U.S. mainstream media began describing Iraqis resisting U.S. occupation of their country as "terrorists," you knew the militarists in Washington had won a decisive victory in the propaganda wars. The guerrilla fighters were no longer just "insurgents," the term that all major media outlets adopted in the summer of 2003. The Iraqi resistance had graduated into "terrorists."

It doesn't get any more mainstream than *Newsweek*, the *Washington Post* Co.-owned newsweekly. In its Feb. 7, 2005 issue, the magazine described Sami Muhammad Saeed al-Jafi as "a terrorist demolition man who confessed to 32 car bombings over the last two years" in Iraq. In the same article, *Newsweek* recounted how American warplanes dropped six guided bombs on a large villa about 11 miles outside the city of Ramadi that killed 21 members of a family, including a dozen children. Nowhere in the piece did *Newsweek* use the "t" word to describe the American bombers.

The news media has always had double standards in its coverage of U.S. foreign policy. The media's selective use of the word "terrorism" to describe what's going on in Iraq today proves once again such value-laden words should be forbidden in newsrooms across the nation.

Through the ages, the label of "terrorist" has been used as a propaganda weapon by nation-states against people and groups who oppose, sometimes violently, the policies of government. The U.S. mainstream media long ago embraced the government's definition of terrorism, which typically applies to the exploits of non-state actors but also gets attached to "rogue" states such as Iran, Syria and Libya. On the rare occasion the media references acts of terrorism committed by a

Western state, the person or group making such a claim is painted in a derisive light.

In a different world, with a revamped news media, reporters would be allowed to refer to the 9/11 attacks as acts of terrorism without being guilty of hypocrisy as long as they referred to the U.S. government's conduct in Afghanistan and Iraq as terrorism. The same rules would apply to the actions in Iraq of America's junior partners, Britain and Australia, as well as Russia's actions in Chechnya and Israel's conduct against the Palestinians. And so on.

Terrorism is exemplified by hijackers flying airliners into office buildings in New York City and pilots dropping bombs from warplanes onto buildings in Fallujah. It's not one or the other. Terrorism is action that involves causing physical injury or death ("violence") to innocent people ("non-combatants") to further an ideological cause. Using this definition, what occurred in New York City on 9/11 certainly qualifies as terrorism as do the actions of the U.S. government in Iraq and Afghanistan during the past three-and-a-half years.

Christopher Hitchens, a cheerleader for the U.S. invasions and occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq as well as NATO's intervention in Yugoslavia in the 1990s, has written extensively on the use of the word "terrorism" and prefers that reporters and commentators reserve using the "t" word only in reference to the most heinous acts of violence.

"All parties to all wars will at some time employ terrorizing methods. But then everybody except a pacifist would be a potential supporter of terrorism," Hitchens wrote in a Nov. 18, 2002 article on online magazine *Slate*. "And if everything is terror, then nothing is — which would mean



we had lost an important word of condemnation."

Hitchens isn't averse to using the term terrorism to describe the actions of governments — just not the conduct of the U.S. and British governments. He's attacked President Clinton for ordering a cruise missile strike on a pharmaceutical plant in the Sudan and Henry Kissinger for his role in various nefarious activities while working for Presidents Nixon and Ford. But they weren't acts of terrorism, according to Hitchens. And don't hold your breath waiting for him to describe any of the military adventures launched by his favorite recent American president, George W. Bush, as acts of terrorism.

In fact, Hitchens attacked Noam Chomsky when the MIT professor dared to compare the 9/11 attacks to Clinton's bombing of the Sudanese pharmaceutical plant. After much taunting by Hitchens, Chomsky responded:

"That Hitchens cannot mean what he writes is clear, in the first place, from his reference to the bombing of the Sudan. He must be unaware that he is expressing such racist contempt for African victims of a terrorist crime, and cannot intend what his words imply. This single atrocity destroyed half the pharmaceutical supplies of a poor African country and the facilities for replenishing them, with an enormous human toll. Hitchens is outraged that I compared this atrocity to what I called "the wickedness and awesome cruelty" of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11 (quoting Robert Fisk), adding that the actual toll in the Sudan case can only be surmised, because the US blocked any UN inquiry and few were interested enough to pursue the matter. That the toll is dreadful is hardly in doubt."

Hitchens' rules for the use of terrorism are essentially the same as those adopted by the mainstream media. In Hitchens' world, the U.S. destruction of Fallujah in late 2004 was part of the U.S. government's noble "war on terrorism." In a November 2004 speech at Kenyon College in Ohio, Hitchens referred to the U.S. military's ac-

tions in Fallujah, explaining that "the death toll is not nearly high enough ... too many [jihadists] have escaped."

The mainstream media essentially agreed with Hitchens' interpretation of the siege of Fallujah, refusing to describe the U.S. military's conduct as terrorism. Instead, the media has essentially bought into the U.S. government's spin about the occupation representing one front in the "global war on terror."

Edward Herman explains in his book "The Terrorism Industry" that the mainstream media have identified the main terrorists of the world — the United States and other aggressive nation-states — as victims engaging in "counterterrorism." This

**Edward Herman explains in his book "The Terrorism Industry" that the mainstream media have identified the main terrorists of the world — the United States and other aggressive nation-states — as victims engaging in "counterterrorism." This identification has become particularly acute since 9/11 as the media has adopted the government's propaganda term "war on terrorism" not only in its editorials and commentary but in news stories.**

identification has become particularly acute since 9/11 as the media has adopted the government's propaganda term "war on terrorism" not only in its editorials and commentary but in news stories.

Since George W. Bush declared his "war on terrorism," some dissident commentators have pointed out that the war on terrorism can never be won. Nor can it ever end. Neither result is logically possible because "terrorism" is a policy of both state and non-state actors, not a tangible enemy. Hence, any war waged against it can neither have a winner nor an ending.

Plus, if Americans were to wage an honest "war on terrorism," they'd first have to target what Martin Luther King Jr. described as the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today — their own gov-

ernment. Americans would be forced to reject the pronouncements of their mass media, which would continue to follow a national agenda and party line on terrorism.

Mass media owners and reporters generally believe in the exceptional character of the state and the benevolence of its leaders, Herman writes. "Under the force of such symbolism, the mass media close ranks with the government, and the media's capacity to challenge the state agenda and terminology, already compromised by normal sourcing practices, is suspended altogether," Herman explains. "A full-scale propaganda campaign can ensue with full mass media cooperation and complete sus-

pension of any watchdog service. The government is allowed to define the key words and issues, inflate their importance at its discretion, and mobilize useful symbols."

Herman's analysis sounds extremely familiar because it applies perfectly to how the mass media today has embraced the U.S. government's "war on terrorism." His descriptions also represented the media's behavior in the 1980s when the "The Terrorism Industry" was first published. In fact, the analysis applies to all modern governments and mass media outlets that have been faced with threats to "national security."

James Bovard writes in "Terrorism and Tyranny," a book released in the post-9/11 era, that the word "terrorism" must not become "an incantation that miraculously razes all limits on government power."

"Excessive trust of government can be subversive of democracy," Bovard says. If Bovard is correct in his assessment, the mainstream media could be found guilty on many counts of subverting democracy, based on its subservience to the state, especially on issues related to foreign policy.

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# Media as Judge: The Case of Tre Arrow

*In 2004 American-born environmentalist Tre Arrow fled the United States for Canada to escape trumped up charges that he had participated in an arson attack on some logging equipment. At the time it was clear that he was being targeted because he was a very effective activist. Tre Arrow is currently being held in Canada pending possible extradition to the US to face charges of arson and conspiracy. He has not been convicted, and has stated, "I am innocent of the charges the US government is trying to pin on me. Just as many activists have experienced, I am being targeted by the US government and the FBI, not because I am guilty, but because I have chosen to challenge the status quo."*

*Mynah Meagher and Ben Shannon of the Tre Arrow Defense Committee have recently completed a speaking tour to raise awareness about the media's role in the criminalization of Tre Arrow. APR caught up with them in Victoria, BC.*

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**APR: Tre Arrow has only being charged with arson in the United States. This is not a big deal, so can you explain why he has not been released on bail in Canada while awaiting an extradition hearing?**

Tre has been incarcerated for the last 11 months essentially because of the political nature of the charges in the United States. Tre has been branded an "ecoterrorist" by both the corporate media and the FBI. In light of his "terrorist"

status Canadian Judge Dohm, who is overseeing Tre's extradition to the US, has set an unheard of \$300,000 dollars bail.

***Calling someone a terrorist is a serious charge—why would they do it?***



The corporate media's purpose is to make a profit, and news about terrorism sells. The media have called Tre Arrow an "ecoterrorist" in hundreds of articles—some published before he was actually charged with any crime, by the way.

***Ok, so they are selling papers. But the label itself is interesting. It reminds me of Nazi Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels' concept of the "big lie." If you repeat a lie enough times it sticks. Who,***

***exactly, came up with this term—"eco-terrorist"?***

"Ecoterrorist" was not a creation of the FBI or any other government organization. It was actually coined by Ron Arnold, a propaganda specialist and vicepresident of a "public interest" outfit called The Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise. His role is to discredit and dismantle the environmental movement, and the media is his weapon of choice. From the start, his organization has been feeding the media with the "information" that they use to justify labeling Tre. The FBI are also in on it. Even after Oregon Judge Redden, in his ruling in the 2001 arson case against Jacob

Sherman (Tre Arrow's coaccused), stated that "The term 'terrorist' is not to be used in reference to this case or the defendants," the FBI continued to paint Tre with that brush. The media did too. It's outrageous, particularly when you consider the implications for Tre, who faces some serious jail time as a result. We're talking about someone's life here. A responsible media would have condemned the FBI for using that term, and it would have nailed Ron Arnold on it too.

***Are you suggesting that Tre Arrow's life is in the hands of the corporate media?***

Sadly, Yes. The media have literally become the judge and jury. They are not only using the term "ecoterrorist" to describe Tre: they are refusing to use words like "accused," "alleged" or even "suggested" when discussing his case. They are implying that he has had his trial and already been convicted for some awful action that killed innocent people...

***When in fact he is not a terrorist by any stretch of the imagination, and "innocent until proven guilty" as well.***

Damn right! Tre has never stepped one foot into a court room to face these charges, let  
(continued on page 19)



# 5,000 Desertions and Counting

**J**ohn Fogerty has it right. "It's déjà vu all over again," except with a difference.

In Vietnam, in the post-Tet period, when it had become clear to the soldiers on the ground that the war was a lost cause and that they were risking their lives and limbs just to provide cover to Richard Nixon and the other politicians in Washington, mutiny, desertion and "fragging"—the offing of overly aggressive officers who were trying to get you killed before your tour ended, not to mention the crazed and superstitious offing of the guys carrying the body bags into battle (if there were no body bags, nobody could get killed)—became epidemic.

This time around, as it becomes clear that the U.S. cannot win—whatever that even means—in Iraq, and is destined to be tossed summarily out of the country dragging its tail at some point, whether this year or five years from now, it's a different army. Instead of angry and unwilling draftees, the military doing the fighting this time around is composed, at least nominally, of volunteers—people who either signed up as regular military, or who joined the reserves or the National Guard. Few of them, obviously, thought they'd be in this kind of endless guerrilla war in a country half a world away, but they still know that they did sign up.

Granted many of the grunts in the desert were either sold a bill of goods by conniving and dishonest recruiters, or were driven to join the military by a lack of any employment alternative, or they saw military service as a way to pay for a college education that for many poor Americans is financially out of reach any other way, but they still have a sense, most of them, that they asked for the uniform.

But this is also an older, more self-assured military, which became apparent

when a group of National Guard soldiers in Kuwait, about to be sent into the battle zone, were given a chance to meet with Defense Secretary and war architect Donald Rumsfeld.

They didn't frag the secretary, but if words could kill, that pompous gasbag would be pushing up daisies right now. The soldiers peppered him with hard questions about stop-loss orders that keep many of them on active duty long past their enlistment periods, about having to fight without body armor, about being

**They didn't frag the secretary, but if words could kill, that pompous gasbag would be pushing up daisies right now.**

given humvees and heavy trucks with no armor even as half or more of the casualties and fatalities of U.S. servicepeople in Iraq could have been prevented with better armor. In short, they let the shocked and befuddled secretary know that they are royally pissed at what they're being asked to do. These soldiers dared to speak out in a way that should shame the Washington and Pentagon press corps (if that overpaid and over groomed lot weren't such shameless suckups to power).

We hear now too, that this army of 150,000 in Iraq has so far experienced 5000 desertions—an astonishing rate of 3.3 percent. That's remarkable, considering how hard it must be to desert in that environment. In Vietnam, you could hide out in a Saigon brothel, or, as some soldiers did, melt into the jungle, turn yourself over to the VC, and get smuggled north to North Vietnam and eventually

Russia or even Sweden. The options in Iraq aren't so good, particularly with an insurgency that is far less organized and disciplined, and that is as likely to kill a wandering deserter as to give him or her shelter and sanctuary.

How much longer will it be before desertion and angry questioning, and the occasional mutiny like we saw in late October with the fuel convoy that refused orders because of a lack of guards and armor on its explosion-prone trucks, give way to the same kind of disorder, sabotage and mayhem that plagued the U.S. military in Vietnam? When will it descend on the U.S. war machine in Iraq?

My guess is that day isn't that far off.

When soldiers believe in what they are doing—when what they're actually doing jibes more or less with the propaganda they were fed in training—they can endure incredible risks and hardship. Remember, a lot of U.S. troops believed they were avenging the 9/11 attacks and protecting America from a madman with The Bomb. Now many are realizing they are fighting a nationalist resistance in a country that was never a threat to the U.S., and that had nothing to do with 9/11. As it becomes ever clearer that they are just cannon fodder, that they are being asked to do something less noble, or worse, that all they are doing is cleaning up a mess made by political hacks, ideologues and incompetents back home, all they will want to do is what anybody in that situation would want to do: get out and back home alive and in one piece.

What we're seeing now are the first cracks.

It will only get worse.

As Fogerty sings in his powerful new song: "It's déjà vu all over again." —  
*Dave Lindorff*

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"5,000 Desertions and Counting" first appeared at the *CounterPunch* web site ([www.counterpunch.org](http://www.counterpunch.org)). Dave Lindorff's new book of *CounterPunch* columns titled "This Can't be Happening!" has just been published by Common Courage Press. Information about the book and other work by Lindorff can be found at [www.thiscantbehappening.net](http://www.thiscantbehappening.net).



## Without serious steps to end the occupation no "window of opportunity"

Numerous commentators, in Israel and abroad, speak of "a window of opportunity" and a unique chance to restart the peace process. But for that to be true, quite a few steps are needed—in the first place, on the part of the occupier who has the overwhelming power on the ground:

- Complete cessation of settlement construction and extension of settlements going on throughout the West Bank, and the dismantling of all the "unauthorized settlement outposts" which the government promised more than a year ago;
- Achieving an agreement on an immediate bilateral ceasefire, including an end to all violent acts by the IDF on the one hand and all Palestinian organizations and armed groups on the other;
- Total cessation of the manhunt against the "wanted Palestinians", their assassinations and detentions and the nightly invasions of Palestinian towns and villages;
- Removal of all the roadblocks which deny free movement to Palestinians and strangle the Palestinian economy;
- Release of Palestinian political leaders imprisoned in Israel, such as Marwan Barghouti and Husam Hader, members of the Palestinian Legislature;
- Widespread release of Palestinian prisoners, including those sentenced to long terms and those defined as "having blood on their hands" (most decision-makers on both sides, Israelis as well as Palestinians, are people bearing direct responsibility for killings, including the killing of civilians).
- The return of Israeli forces to the positions held on September 2000, at the outbreak of the present Intifada, and restora-

tion of the status of the "A" areas as sovereign Palestinian territory, to which Israeli armed forces have no access;

- A stop to the construction of "The Separation Wall" and immediate dismantling of the wall sections which penetrate into the West Bank territory and deprive Palestinians of land and livelihood - in accordance with the verdict of the International Court at the Hague.
- Resuming the negotiations between the state of Israel and the Palestinian Authority/Palestinian Liberation Organization, on all issues including and especially the definite agreement between these two parties.

Negotiations should be conducted on the basis of the following principles:

- The withdrawal of Israeli armed forces and settlers from the Gaza Strip and the northern West Bank must be conducted under a detailed agreement between the two sides, rather than as a unilateral Israeli act;
- Occupation in the Gaza Strip must be ended completely, with all parts of its territory evacuated including the area of the Egyptian border ("Philadelphi Route"), giving the inhabitants free access to the outside world by land, sea and air.
- Third parties, such as Egypt and/or an international force, can be involved in the Israeli evacuation of the Gaza Strip and stabilizing the situation during and after the evacuation, with the dispositions and authority of such forces defined in an Israeli-Palestinian agreement.
- Houses and public utilities in the evacuated Israeli settlements would not be demolished but handed over intact to the

Palestinian side, with their value enumerated by an agreed international agency, to be reckoned in future negotiations;

- It should be explicitly agreed that Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the northern West Bank would not be a final step, but a prelude to a process aimed at a definite peace agreement between the State of Israel and the State of Palestine to be, resuming implementation of the "Road Map" defined by the international community;
- As stipulated in "The Road Map", the international facilitator and arbiter in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations should be the international "Quartet" in its entirety, rather than the United States alone—which is manifestly unable and unwilling to act impartially;
- The border between Israel and Palestine would be based on the borders of June 5, 1967, with the possibility of mutual border rectifications being agreed upon;
- United Jerusalem shall be the capital of both states, West Jerusalem the capital of Israel and East Jerusalem the capital of Palestine;
- There shall be a fair and agreed solution to the problem of the Palestinian refugees.

Obviously Ariel Sharon, Prime Minister of Israel, is completely unwilling to accept even a small part of these principles, as it is not at all his aim to end Israeli occupation of most of the West Bank. In the short range, Sharon may pay lip service to "the new chance for peace" but in practice he does everything in his power to cause the failure of the newly-elected Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazen) —as he did in 2003, when Abbas was Prime Minister.

Knowing the above full well, Nobel Prize Laureate Shimon Peres led his Labor Party to enter the Sharon Cabinet, take up portfolios and assume full legal and moral responsibility for its acts. Yossi Beilin, architect of the Oslo and Geneva Accords,



saved the Sharon Government from falling and made his Meretz/Yahad Party into one of the main pillars ensuring its continued existence. Also Knesset Members Dahamshe and A-Sana of the United Arab Party followed suit to a certain degree—by abstaining in the Knesset vote.

These parties and leaders, who got the confidence of hundreds of thousands of voters on the basis of opposing the occupation and declaring their adherence to peace, have assumed a grave responsibility. However sincere their motives might be, they risk going down in history as having helped to perpetuate the occupation and bloody conflict. The very least which can be expected of them, in this precarious situation, is not to confine themselves solely to ensuring implementation of the Gaza Disengagement but rather use in every possible way the leverage they now possess over Sharon to push towards a total end of the occupation.

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If you want to support Gush Shalom's activities you can send a cheque or cash, wrapped well in an extra piece of paper to:

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Gush Shalom (Translated from Hebrew, the name means "The Peace Bloc") is the hard core of the Israeli peace movement. Often described as "resolute", "militant", "radical" or "consistent", it is known for its unwavering stand in times of crisis, such as the al-Aksa intifada. For years now, Gush Shalom has played a leading role in determining the moral and political agenda of the peace forces in Israel, as well as in breaking the so-called "national consensus" based on misinformation. Gush Shalom is an extra-parliamentary organization, independent of any party or other political grouping. Some of its activists do belong to political parties, but the Gush is not aligned to any particular party.

## How Silent are the 'Humanitarian' Invaders of Kosovo?

**Kosovo – the site of a genocide that never was - is now a violent "free market" in drugs and prostitution. What does this tell us about the likely outcome of the Iraq war?**

Muted by the evidence of the Anglo-American catastrophe in Iraq, the "humanitarian" war party ought to be called to account for its forgotten crusade in Kosovo, the model for Blair's "onward march of liberation". Just as Iraq is being torn apart by the forces of empire, so was Yugoslavia, the multi-ethnic state that uniquely rejected both sides in the cold war.

Lies as great as those told by Bush and Blair were deployed by Clinton and Blair in their grooming of public opinion for an illegal, unprovoked attack on a European country. Following the same path as the build-up to the invasion of Iraq, the

media coverage in the spring of 1999 was a series of fraudulent justifications, beginning with the then US defence secretary William Cohen's claim that "we've now seen about 100,000 military-aged [Albanian] men missing . . . they may have been murdered". David Scheffer, the then US ambassador-at-large for war crimes, announced that as many as "225,000 ethnic Albanian men aged between 14 and 59" may have been killed. Blair invoked the Holocaust and "the spirit of the Second World War". The British press took its cue. "Flight from genocide," wrote the Daily Mail. "Echoes of the Holocaust," chorused the Sun and the Mirror. In parliament, the heroic Clare Short compared to Nazi propagandists those (such as myself) who ob-

jected to the bombing of defenceless people.

By June 1999, with the bombardment over, international forensic teams began subjecting Kosovo to minute examination. The American FBI arrived to investigate what was called "the largest crime scene in the FBI's forensic history". Several weeks later, having not found a single mass grave, the FBI went home. The Span-

**More than 200,000 Serbs, Roma, Bosniaks, Turks, Croats and Jews have been ethnically cleansed by the KLA, with Nato forces standing by. KLA hit squads have burned, looted or demolished 85 Orthodox churches and monasteries, according to the UN.**

ish forensic team also returned home, its leader complaining angrily that he and his colleagues had become part of "a semantic pirouette by the war propaganda machines, because we did not find one - not one - mass grave".

In November 1999, the *Wall Street Journal* published the results of its own investigation, dismissing "the mass grave obsession". Instead of "the huge killing fields some investigators were led to expect . . . the pattern is of scattered killings [mostly] in areas where the separatist Kosovo Liberation Army has been active". The Journal concluded that Nato stepped up its claims about Serbian killing fields when it "saw a fatigued press corps drifting toward the contrary story: civilians killed by Nato's bombs . . . The war in Kosovo was cruel, bitter, savage. Genocide it wasn't."

One year later, the International War Crimes Tribunal, a body in effect set up by Nato, announced that the final count of bodies found in Kosovo's "mass graves"



## SELECTIONS

### “Humanitarian” Intervention

was 2,788. This included combatants on both sides and Serbs and Roma murdered by the Albanian Kosovo Liberation Army. Like Iraq’s fabled weapons of mass destruction, the figures used by the US and British governments and echoed by journalists were inventions—along with Serbian “rape camps” and Clinton’s and Blair’s claims that Nato never deliberately bombed civilians.

Code-named “Stage Three”, Nato’s civilian targets included public transport, hospitals, schools, museums, churches. “It was common knowledge that Nato went to Stage Three [after a couple of weeks],” said James Bissett, the Canadian ambassador in Belgrade during the attack. “Otherwise, they would not have been bombing bridges on Sunday afternoons, and market places.”

Nato’s clients were the Kosovo Liberation Army. Seven years earlier, the State Department had designated the KLA as a terrorist organisation in league with al-Qaeda. In 1999, KLA thugs were feted; Robin Cook, then foreign secretary, allowed them to call him on his mobile phone. “The Kosovar Albanians played us like a Stradivarius violin,” wrote the former UN commander in Bosnia, Major General Lewis MacKenzie, last April. “We have subsidised and indirectly supported their violent campaign for an ethnically pure Kosovo. We have never blamed them for being the perpetrators of the violence in the early 1990s, and we continue to portray them as the designated victim today, in spite of evidence to the contrary.”

The trigger for the bombing of Yugoslavia was, according to Nato, the failure of the Serbian delegation to sign up to the Rambouillet peace conference. What went mostly unreported was that the Rambouillet accord had a secret Annex B, which Madeleine Albright’s delegation had inserted on the last day. This demanded the military occupation of the whole of Yugoslavia, a country with bitter memories of the Nazi occupation. As the Foreign Office minister Lord Gilbert later conceded to a Commons defence select committee, Annex B was planted deliberately to provoke rejection.

Equally revealing was a chapter dealing exclusively with the Kosovan economy.



This called for a “free-market economy” and the privatisation of all government assets. As the Balkans writer Neil Clark has pointed out: “The rump Yugoslavia . . . was the last economy in central-southern Europe to be uncolonised by western capital. ‘Socially owned enterprises’, the form of worker self-management pioneered under Tito, still predominated. Yugoslavia had publicly owned petroleum, mining, car and tobacco industries . . .”

At the Davos summit of neoliberal chieftains in 1999, Blair berated Belgrade, not for its handling of Kosovo, but for its failure to embrace “economic reform” fully. In the bombing campaign that followed, it was state-owned companies, rather than military sites, that were targeted. Nato’s destruction of only 14 Yugoslav army tanks compares with its bombing of 372 centres of industry, including the Zastava car factory. “Not one foreign or privately owned factory was bombed,” wrote Clark.

Erected on the foundation of this huge lie, Kosovo today is a violent, criminalised, UN-administered “free market” in drugs and prostitution; unemployment is 65 per cent. More than 200,000 Serbs, Roma, Bosniaks, Turks, Croats and Jews have been ethnically cleansed by the KLA, with Nato forces standing by. KLA hit squads have burned, looted or demolished 85 Or-

thodox churches and monasteries, according to the UN. The courts are venal. “You shot an 89-year-old Serb grandmother?” mocked a UN narcotics officer. “Good for you. Get out of jail.”

Although Security Council Resolution 1244 recognises Kosovo as an integral part of Yugoslavia, multinational companies are being offered ten- and 15-year leases of the province’s local industries and resources, including the vast Trepca mines, some of the richest mineral deposits in the world. Overseeing this plundered, now almost ethnically pure “future democracy” (Blair), are 4,000 American troops at Camp Bondsteel, a 775-acre permanent-base imperial presence.

Meanwhile, the show trial of Slobodan Milosevic proceeds as farce. Milosevic was a brute; he was also a banker once regarded as the West’s man who was prepared to implement “economic reforms” in keeping with IMF, World Bank and European Union demands; to his cost, he refused to surrender sovereignty. The empire expects nothing less. — **John Pilger**

This excerpt first appeared in the *New Statesman* ([www.newstatesman.com](http://www.newstatesman.com)) John Pilger’s new book, “Tell Me No Lies: Investigative Journalism and its Triumphs,” is published by Jonathan Cape.



## Gary Webb: Blacklisted by the White Corporate Media

Gary Webb shot himself, twice in the head. Coroner Robert Lyons says, "It's unusual in a suicide case to have two shots, . . . but it has been done in the past, and it is in fact a distinct possibility" ("Gary Webb's Death Confirmed as Suicide," *Editor & Publisher*, December 15, 2004). Conspiracy theorists suspected that the CIA or Contras killed him, but what drove Webb to death was far more mundane and insidious: the power of elite orthodoxy that controls the corporate media, which does not brook any radical challenge to the dark alliance of money and power that links Washington's domestic and foreign policies and devastates the Black and Latino working class at home and abroad.

Webb gained national attention in the 1990s after writing a series of stories for the *Mercury News* linking the CIA to Nicaraguan Contras trying to overthrow the Sandinista government and to drug sales of crack cocaine flooding South Central Los Angeles in the 1980s.

The *Mercury News* and others later questioned the conclusions in Webb's reporting, and he left the San Jose newspaper in 1997 after being moved to a suburban bureau. The paper later published an apology.

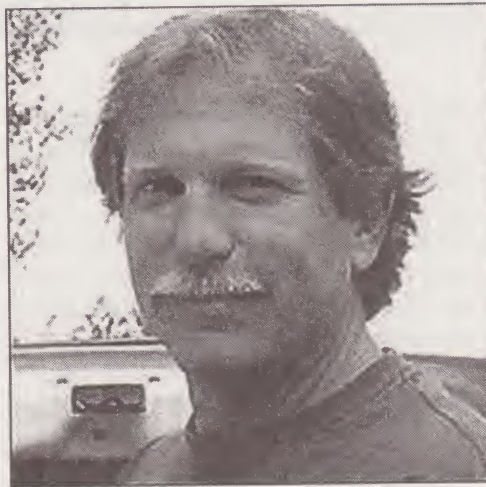
Webb's ex-wife, Sue Bell, told the *Sacramento Bee* that Webb, 49, had been distraught for some time over his inability to get a job at another major newspaper. "The way he was acting it would be hard for me to believe it was anything but suicide," Bell said.

The *Bee* also reported that Webb had paid for his own cremation earlier in the year and had named Bell months ago as the beneficiary of his bank account. He had sold his house last week, because he could no longer afford the mortgage, and was upset that his motorcycle had been stolen last week.

Why did Webb's articles on the CIA-Contra drug connection constitute a radical challenge, though, since some elements

of the connection had already been reported in the mainstream media, to say nothing of the conclusion of the Senate Subcommittee on Narcotics, Terrorism, and International Operations (led by Senator John Kerry) that "senior U.S. policy makers were not immune to the idea that drug money was a perfect solution to the Contras' funding problems"?

As Peter Kornbluh wrote in 1997, Although many readers of the *Mercury News*



articles may not have known it, "Dark Alliance" is not the first reported link between the contra war and drug smuggling. More than a decade ago, allegations surfaced that contra forces, organized by the CIA to overthrow the Sandinista government in Nicaragua, were consorting with drug smugglers with the knowledge of U.S. officials. The Associated Press broke the first such story on December 20, 1985. The AP's Robert Parry and Brian Barger reported that three contra groups "have engaged in cocaine trafficking, in part to help finance their war against Nicaragua." ("Crack, the Contras, and the CIA: Storm over 'Dark Alliance,'" *Columbia Journalism Review*, Jan/Feb 1997)

Kornbluh went on to explain: The *Mercury News* series "touched a raw nerve in

the way our stories hadn't," observes Robert Parry. One reason is that Parry and Barger's stories had focused on the more antiseptic smuggling side of drug trafficking in far-off Central America. Webb's tale brought the story home, focusing on what he identified as the distribution network and its target—the inner cities of California. Particularly among African-American communities, devastated by the scourge of crack and desperate for information and answers, Webb's reporting found ready constituencies. From Farrakhan followers to the most moderate of black commentators, the story reverberated. "If this is true, then millions of black lives have been ruined and America's jails and prisons are now clogged with young African-Americans because of a cynical plot by a CIA that historically has operated in contempt of the law," wrote Carl T. Rowan, the syndicated columnist.

The wildfire-like sweep of "Dark Alliance" was all the more remarkable because it took place without the tinder of the mainstream press. Instead, the story roared through the new communications media of the Internet and black talk radio—two distinct, but in this case somewhat symbiotic, information channels. With the Internet, as Webb put it, "you don't have to be the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post* to bust a national story anymore."

Webb's story sparked rallies, protests, and demonstrations in Black communities, criticizing not only Republicans but the Bill Clinton administration and the corporate media.

Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) told a Los Angeles rally last month that "people in high places were winking and blinking, and our children were dying. . . . We are going to make somebody pay for what they did to our community."

Joe Madison, a Washington radio host and NAACP board member, told his listeners yesterday: "Clinton doesn't want to take on the CIA. The Republicans don't want to expose the contras as drug smugglers and thugs. And the CIA doesn't want to admit it trampled all over the Constitution." Madison was arrested with activist Dick Gregory in a protest outside CIA headquarters.

Derrick Z. Jackson, a *Boston Globe* columnist who is black, declared: "The only conclusion is that Ronald Reagan said



yes to crack and the destruction of black lives at home to fund the killing of commies abroad."

Some white journalists have also jumped on the bandwagon. *New York Observer* Editor Joe Conason praised the "stunning articles," saying: "If Bob Dole or Bill Clinton actually cared about drug addiction . . . they would start asking tough questions about the role of the Central Intelligence Agency."

In Internet postings complaining about the lack of coverage, one person said: "Why is *The Post* quiet about the CIA/LA Cocaine Connection?" Another questioned whether the paper's black writers have been "muzzled."

In fact, *Post* columnist William Raspberry has written that he does not know if the charges are true but is struck by the "willingness . . . of so many black leaders to take the story literally." The *Post* has run three news stories and several items and columns on the controversy. Webb, who has conducted numerous broadcast interviews and is now getting calls from the likes of Montel Williams, sees a clear racial split in the reaction.

"When I've done TV and radio things, the producers who have been pushing the story have been predominantly black or other minorities," Webb said. "They have thanked me. It was networking by minority journalists that got this thing out to the general public." (Howard Kurtz, "Running with The CIA Story; Reporter Says Series Didn't Go as Far as Readers Took It," *The Washington Post*, October 2, 1996, p. B1)

Blacks listened to Gary Webb, recognized the truth in his story, made connections between the impacts of Washington's domestic and foreign policies, spread the word through such channels as the Internet and Black talk radio that are not fully controlled by elite orthodoxy, and took public actions attempting to "Crack the CIA." That is what made Webb dangerous. Consequently, Webb was blacklisted by the white corporate media, unable to obtain "a job at another major newspaper" and pay for the mortgage. — **Yoshie Furuhashi**

"Gary Webb: Blacklisted by the White Corporate Media" is excerpted from the blog *Critical Montages* ([montages.blogspot.com](http://montages.blogspot.com)).

## SELECTIONS

### The Case of Tre Arrow (continued from page 13)

alone been convicted of them. And the accusation involves burning logging equipment, not blowing up the Empire State Building! Stating that an individual is guilty before they've even been tried is undemocratic and unjust. By playing this game, the corporate media has prejudiced the public right across the continent. Anyway, there are reasons why he is still being called an "ecoterrorist"—note that prefix—"eco".

### "Eco" stands for ecological. So?

The goal of logging companies like MacMillan-Bloedel and Weyerhaeuser is to make a profit at any cost. These big corporations are extremely important for West Coast capitalism—and protecting business-as-usual is important to the government and the FBI. In this regard, the environmental movement is a thorn in the side of the multinational corporations and the US state. So the FBI has deployed a tried-and-true tactic, the tactic of divide and conquer. The FBI calls one half of the environmentalist movement "ecoterrorist" and other half "pacifist" and then steps back and watches us fight amongst ourselves, effectively diverting our attention from the main cause, namely saving the environment. It is true that some anarchist-oriented environmental groups like the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) have defended the environment through property destruction, but no ELFer who has been caught has ever been charged with "terrorism," even though the FBI has labeled the ELF America's "Number One Domestic Terrorist Threat."

Why are ELF activists caught destroying stuff never charged with terrorism? Because legally their actions do not fall under that designation. So why does the term "eco-terrorist" continue to circulate? It's because the FBI and capitalist propaganda groups like The Centre for the Defense of Free Enterprise are pushing the term in the mass media. This is crucial for their "divide and conquer" tactic. It is part of a covert war against the environmental movement.

*That is an interesting analysis. Getting back to the specifics of Tre Arrow's case, what has been the impact of the "eco-terrorist" media blitzkrieg on his chances for a fair trial?*

Imagine you are a potential juror in Portland, Oregon, where he is to be tried. For the last three years you've been bombarded with the term "ecoterrorist" every time you read a story about Tre Arrow. "EcoTerrorist Tre Arrow" did this and "EcoTerrorist Tre Arrow" did that. The label has become a subliminal message. How, then, can you sit in a jury box and honestly judge his case? Tre's name and reputation have been destroyed and it will be extremely difficult to find an unbiased jury that can rule fairly.

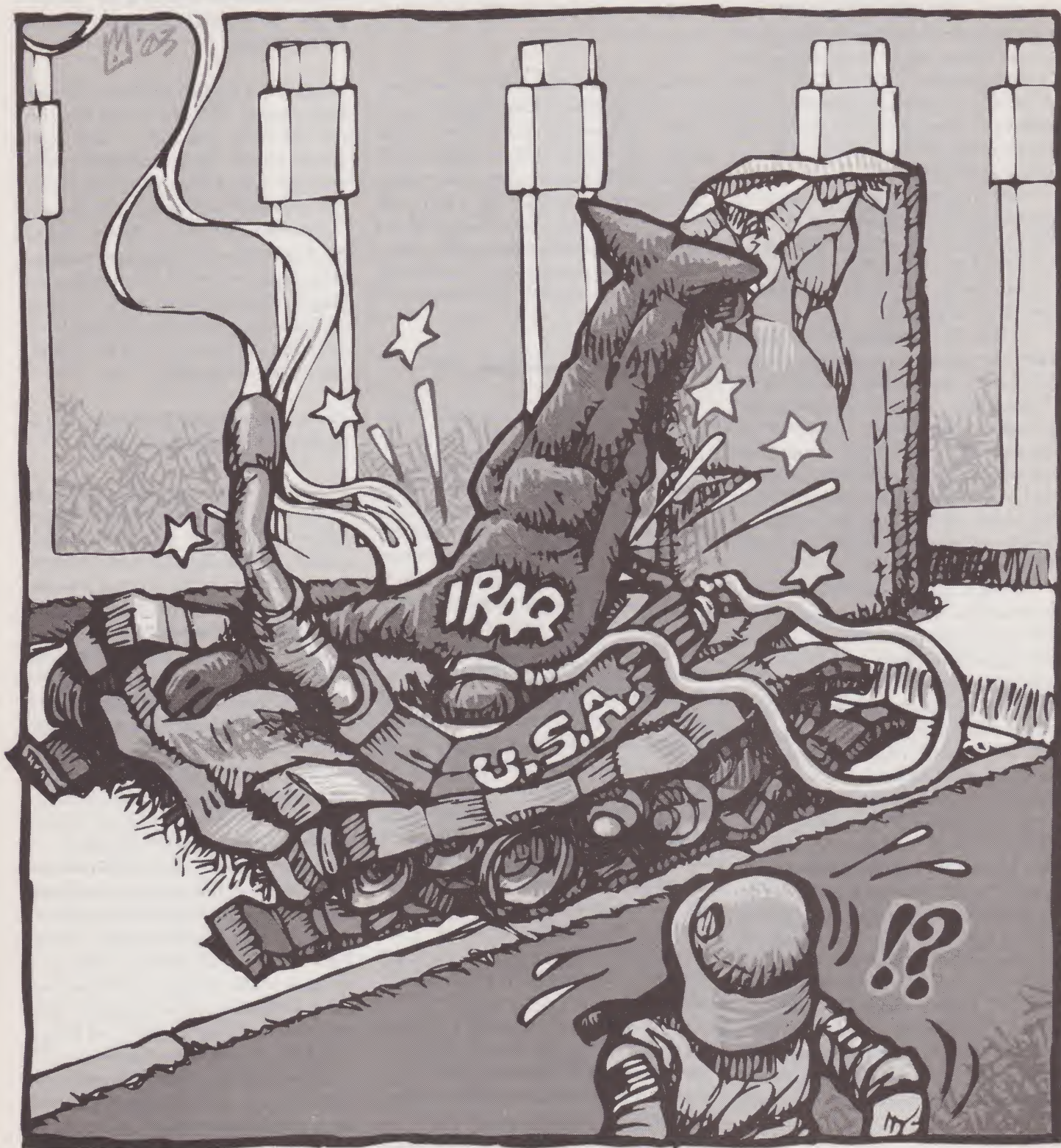
*The evidence against Tre Arrow must be significant. What is the evidence?*

This is the most interesting part of the whole case. There is no hard evidence against Tre. The only evidence is the testimony of a convicted felon and arsonist, Jacob Sherman. It was Sherman who told the FBI after four days of interrogation that Tre Arrow was the master mind behind Sherman's decision to burn logging equipment in 2001. He confessed to doing the arson and then blamed the action on Tre. For this he has received an extremely light sentence—41 months in jail. Compare that sentence with the case of radical environmentalist Jeff Luers, who a year earlier received 270 months—that's 22 and ½ years in jail—for essentially the same crime.

It seems obvious that the FBI wanted to target Tre Arrow and that they pressured Sherman to implicate him in the arson in return for a lighter sentence. So now Tre faces up to 80 years in prison on a string of related charges—conspiracy and so on. 80 years in jail for a peaceful environmental organizer. Since day one Tre has stated his innocence. And he has an alibi who can account for his whereabouts on both evenings when Sherman burnt the logging equipment. Add in his record of nonviolent activism and you have an innocent man.

*Thanks for this interview, and rest assured Alternative Press Review will continue to follow this case. — Allan Antliff*





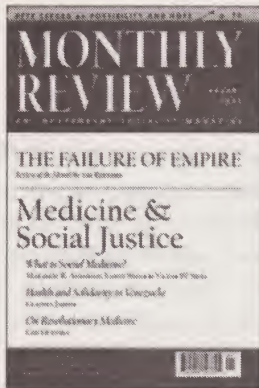
**“we’ve fallen – and we can’t get up!”**

Mike Flugennock



# The Failure of Empire

By Monthly Review Editors



*In "The Failure of Empire" the Monthly Review editors examine the limits and potential repercussions for the United States with its military war machine embroiled in a deepening quagmire in Iraq and as steadily strengthening resistance continues to further stretch US occupation forces ever closer to the breaking point.*

*This essay first appeared in the January 2005 issue of **Monthly Review**.*

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THE United States is facing the prospect of a major defeat in Iraq that is likely to constitute a serious setback in the ongoing campaign to expand the American empire. Behind the pervasive war propaganda as evidenced in the "victorious" attack on Fallujah lies the reality of a U.S. war machine that is fighting a futile battle against growing guerrilla forces, with little chance for a stable political solution to the conflict that could possibly meet U.S. imperial objectives. Nevertheless, the U.S. ruling class, though not unaware of the dangers, is currently convinced that it has no choice but to "stay the course"—a slogan adopted by both political parties and accepted by virtually the entire economic, political, military, and communications establishment. The reason for this seemingly irrational determination to stick it out at all costs can only be understood through an analysis of the logic and limits of capitalist empire.

## The Logic of Imperialism

Capitalism is by its very nature a globally expanding system geared to accumulation on a world scale. Since its beginnings in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it has been a world economy with an international division of labor ruled over by competing nation-states. Cutting across this global system is a structure of inequality variously described as center-periphery, metropolis-satellite, developed-underdeveloped, North-South—all of which point to the wide gap that exists between states at the center and those in the periphery of the system. From the outset, the leading capitalist states engaged in an outward, imperialistic movement.



Precapitalist societies in the Americas, Africa, and Asia were pillaged, their populations enchained, and the plunder sent back to Europe. Wherever possible, noncapitalist societies were destroyed and transformed into colonial dependencies. Meanwhile, the great powers fought over the territories and spoils. As Marx wrote in "The Genesis of the Industrial Capitalist" in volume 1 of *Capital*:

The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the indigenous population of that continent, the beginnings of the conquest and plunder of India, and the conversion of Africa into a preserve for the commercial hunting of blackskins, are all things which characterize the dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief moments of primitive accumulation. Hard on their heels follows the commercial war of the European nations, which has the globe as its battlefield. It begins with the revolt of the Netherlands from Spain, assumes gigantic dimensions in England's Anti-Jacobin War, and is still going on in the shape of the Opium Wars against China, etc.

By the end of the Napoleonic Wars, Britain, which led the way in the industrial revolution, had emerged as the hegemonic imperial power of the capitalist world economy. In this period the European powers divided up the world, either exercising direct political rule over their colonies or where this was not practicable creating conditions for the subordination of peripheral states to the needs of those at the center by means of unequal treaties. Britain's most important colonial possession, the jewel of its empire, was India. But Britain also exercised informal economic control in areas that were not formal colonies, as in Latin America. Wealth extracted from these colonial domains flowed into the coffers of the center capitalist nations, enriching them and enhancing their power. British hegemony over the world economy came under increasing challenge in the early twentieth century, particularly from Germany, and collapsed as a result of the First and Second World Wars, to be replaced in the aftermath of the Second World War by American hegemony as the United States rose to dominance over the world capitalist system.

In the immediate postwar world the United States was, in terms of the sheer material force at its disposal, the most powerful nation that the world had ever seen. It accounted for about half of total world output and 60 percent of its manufacturing and had a monopoly over nuclear weapons. In place of the earlier gold standard, the Bretton Woods Agreement enshrined the U.S. dollar as the main international currency, which was backed up by Washington's agreement to redeem dollars held by the central bankers of other countries for gold. U.S. military bases in the thousands stretched across the globe. U.S. multinational corporations seized control of whole economies in the third world and, although doing so on the basis of so-called "free trade," were backed up in their

economic operations and interests whenever necessary by U.S. military power.

But in many ways U.S. power was constrained. The existence of the Soviet Union, which had arisen out of a socialist revolution in the midst of the First World War, meant that there was another military superpower, which, if nowhere near as powerful as the United States, nonetheless could constrain U.S. actions, placing certain regions off-limits to imperialist expansion, and offering material support to third world revolutions. Still, the real threat to capitalism as a whole and to U.S. global dominance came not from the Soviet Union directly but from the waves of revolution taking place throughout the twentieth century as peoples in Latin America, Africa, and Asia sought to break loose from colonialism or neo-colonialism, i.e., from the position to which they had been relegated in the imperialist division of labor. As the United States surrounded the Soviet Union and China with military bases and alliances and at the same time sought to counter revolutions throughout the third world it found itself up against the global limits of its power.

### Vietnam and the Limits of Empire

Nowhere were the limits of U.S. power more evident than in the Vietnam War. In that war the United States took over what had been a colonial war on the part of the French, blocked elections from taking place throughout the country as established by the Geneva Agreements of 1954, and divided Vietnam in half, creating a puppet regime in the South. In the 1960s a massive buildup of U.S. troops took place in what amounted to an invasion and occupation of the southern part of Vietnam. Unable to win in a guerrilla war, despite expending more than twice as much explosive power as it had employed in the entire Second World War and despite millions of Vietnamese dead, and unable to succeed at "nation building" in South Vietnam, where it sought to prop up a corrupt regime of its own creation, the United States was compelled by growing dissension amongst the U.S. civilian population and by signs of rebellion within the lower military ranks to withdraw under the cover of the "Vietnamization" of the war. The distortions in the U.S. balance of payments in this period contributed to the diminishing hegemony of the dollar as a world currency and the end of the dollar-gold standard. For decades after the United States began its pull-out from Vietnam, the U.S. capacity to intervene militarily was severely limited by what conservatives labeled "the Vietnam Syndrome"—standing for the unwillingness of the U.S. population to engage in major military interventions in other countries.

The War in Vietnam, like other major imperial wars, revealed the logic and limits of capitalist empire. It is often said that the United States had no significant economic interests in Vietnam that would have justified its major intervention there. Niall Ferguson, a professor of financial history at New York University and senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, declares in his new book, *Colossus: The Price of America's Empire*, that "The United States lost face [in Viet-



nam]. That was about all it lost.” Such views tend to reinforce the ideology that since the United States had nothing material to lose in Vietnam it must have been there for no other reason than to promote freedom and democracy. In reality U.S. objectives in Vietnam were dedicated to the maintenance of imperialism as a system. In the broadest sense, this involved strategic goals that have been classically understood under the rubric of “geopolitics,” in which the political, economic, and military requirements of empire are placed within a strategic context that takes into account the geographic, demographic, and natural resource characteristics of particular regions. Such a geopolitical understanding of imperial expansion and defense is of course completely in accord with the necessity of the greatest possible expansion of the capitalist world economy.

The Vietnam War illustrates perfectly the importance of such geopolitical goals. The object of the U.S. intervention was to control the Pacific Rim and to surround and “contain” China as part of a more general geopolitical strategy of global dominance of the “rimlands” of Eurasia—that is, Western Europe, the Pacific Rim, and the Middle East. It was these rimlands that were the main focus of U.S. global military alliances; and it is here that the United States devoted the most resources to establishing and maintaining a military presence. They represented in fact the borders of the imperialist system, in which the United States was the hegemonic power—thus the borders of a loosely constructed American empire.<sup>1</sup>

Viewed in this way, the enormous commitment of the United States to securing Vietnam as part of its imperial sphere—a commitment maintained over five successive presidencies of both parties—was not simply irrational but part of a larger global strategy. For the U.S. ruling class and its military and foreign policy strategists the defeat in Vietnam is remembered as a major failure in defending U.S. interests. In the 1970s the world capitalist economy entered a long-term crisis or stagnation that continues to haunt its every step. In the same period U.S. economic hegemony slipped. This partial withdrawal of the United States from the world stage after the Vietnam War, as its military interventions were curtailed despite growing revolutionary movements in the third world, was often seen by those at the top of U.S. society and in the military as a source of the general sickness or malaise affecting the U.S. order.

## The Return to War

Since the late 1970s Washington has sought to reconstruct its capacity to engage in imperialist wars. Covert wars in Afghanistan and Central America were followed by the direct exercise of American military imperialism in Lebanon, Grenada, and Panama. With the fall of the Soviet bloc and the demise two years later of the Soviet Union itself, the United States moved to fill the vacuum of world power, carrying out military interventions in the Middle East, the Horn of Africa, and the former Yugoslavia that would have previously been unthinkable. Following the attacks of September 2001, the U.S. invasions and occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq and the construction of military bases in the former Soviet republics of Central Asia

constituted a vast expansion of the American empire into hitherto inaccessible regions. Such extension of U.S. imperial power was partly enabled by economic gains—although of a transitory nature—that the United States had made in the 1990s relative to its leading capitalist competitors. It was this that helped give the “antiterrorist” hawks in the administration of George W. Bush the confidence to exploit the fear engendered by the September 2001 attacks to issue the National Security Strategy of the United States of America, in September 2002. This declared that the United States would do all in its power to prevent the appearance of another “peer

competitor” in the military realm and would not hesitate to engage in “preemptive” (or preventive) interventions to advance its national security interests. This was nothing other than a declaration of perpetual war, making it clear that the United States was willing to brandish its armed might in order to expand its empire and thus its geopolitical position in the world at large. Never before in the history of the modern world has any nation laid claim to such a far-reaching strategy for indefinite global domination.

Helping to pave the way for this reassertion of U.S. imperial ambitions was a transformation that took place in the dominant historical account of the Vietnam War. Conservative interpretations of the war propounded by the military leadership and rightwing commentators—at first scarcely taken seriously in the public discussion—became more influential and pervasive as memories of the war receded. In the new climate of making America “stand tall” again, the defeat in Vietnam was increasingly relegated to the classic propagandistic category of a “betrayal” brought on in this case by the



**Despite the much proclaimed “victory” in Fallujah—where the level of destruction unleashed against a city in an already occupied country is probably unequaled in modern times—war planners are working overtime to find a way to stave off a defeat that appears increasingly likely.**

disloyalty of the media and by extremists within the civilian population.<sup>2</sup>

The focus of this reinterpretation centered on the war's turning point in the Vietnamese Tet Offensive of 1968. Tet, it was now said, was a resounding military victory for the U.S. and South Vietnamese military forces, which decimated their National Liberation Front attackers. Yet, in a “betrayal” of the first order, we are told, it was turned into a defeat by the U.S. media and a vocal minority of war protestors, which had the effect of inducing Johnson to throw in the towel. In effect establishment opinion adopted the same verdict on the war offered earlier by General William Westmoreland, commander of the U.S. forces in Vietnam, who wrote in *A Soldier Reports* (1976) that the Tet offensive represented “a striking military defeat for the enemy on anybody's terms....Unfortunately, the enemy scored in the United States the psychological victory that eluded him in Vietnam, so influencing President Johnson and his civilian advisors that they ignored the maxim that when the enemy is hurting you don't diminish the pressure, you increase it.” For Westmoreland, speaking of the Indochina War as a whole, “a lack of determination to stay the course...demonstrated in Cambodia, South Vietnam, and Laos that the alternative to victory was defeat.”

References to U.S. failure to “stay the course” became a major theme of conservative accounts of the war. This phrase had been frequently employed in the war itself. For example, President Johnson had used it in 1967 to convey his resolve to continue the war. In another instance, Townsend Hoopes, the under secretary of the Air Force, had presented Secretary of State Clark Clifford in February 1968 with a strategy for “staying the course for an added number of grinding years” by concentrating merely on controlling populated areas. But the phrase became even more important later on as a hawkish slogan to explain the U.S. defeat. This happened after the noted journalist Stewart Alsop recalled in his memoir, *Stay of Execution* (1973), that Winston Churchill had stated in his

presence: “America, it is a great and strong country, like a workhorse pulling the rest of the world out of despond and despair. But will it stay the course?” Vietnam hawks like Democratic Senator Henry M. Jackson turned to Churchill's question at every opportunity—insisting that the United States had failed to stay the course in Vietnam and should not make this mistake again.<sup>3</sup>

So powerful has this right-wing, military understanding of the Vietnam War become that it is now a force to reckon with in the current war in Iraq. Thus when President George W. Bush declared with respect to Iraq in April 2004 that “We've got to stay the course and we will stay the course,” his Democratic opponent Senator John Kerry echoed that the United States should “stay the course” in Iraq, adding that “Americans differ about whether and how we should have gone to war. But it would be unthinkable now for us to retreat in disarray and leave behind a society deep in strife and dominated by radicals” (Robert Scheer, “Don't Stay the Course Senator,” *Salon.com*, April 28, 2004; Evan Thomas, “The Vietnam Question,” *MSNBC.com*, April 19, 2004).

### **The Road to Ruin in Iraq**

This repeated insistence on staying the course is sometimes reduced to a mere willingness to countenance continuing bloodshed. According to Max Boot, a senior fellow at the prestigious Council on Foreign Relations, in his *Savage Wars of Peace* (a title drawn from Kipling's poem the *White Man's Burden*): “Any nation bent on imperial policing will suffer a few setbacks. The British army, in the course of Queen Victoria's little wars, suffered major defeats with thousands of casualties in the First Afghan War (1842) and the Zulu War (1879). This did not appreciably dampen British determination to defend and expand the empire; it made them hunger for vengeance. If Americans cannot adopt a similarly bloody-minded attitude, then they have no business undertaking imperial policing.”

But adoption of a “bloody-minded attitude”—something that is not lacking at present in Washington—will not save the United States in Iraq. Despite the much proclaimed “victory” in Fallujah—where the level of destruction unleashed against a city in an already occupied country is probably unequaled in modern times—war planners are working overtime to find a way to stave off a defeat that appears increasingly likely. The most important recent treatment of the Iraq War from within the national security establishment has come from Anthony H. Cordesman, a long-time national security adviser for the Department of Defense, specializing in the Middle East and energy issues, who oversaw the assessment of the Yom Kippur War for the Defense Department in 1974. Cordesman is now Alreigh A. Burke Fellow in Strategy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington and the national security analyst for ABC News. In his report “*Playing the Course: A Strategy for Reshaping U.S. Policy in Iraq and the Middle East* (fourth draft, November 22, 2004, *CSIS.org*) Cordesman argues that the United States should not “stay the course” if a pragmatic strategy for suc-



cess, which he calls “playing the course,” does not work. “The US faces too much Iraqi anger and resentment to try to hold on in the face of clear failure, and achieving any lasting success in terms of Iraqi political acceptance means that the US must seek to largely withdraw over the next two years.” Moreover, given the degree of U.S. failure so far the question of a U.S. defeat in Iraq needs to be considered. “The odds of lasting US success in Iraq,” he states, “are now at best even, and may well be worse. The US can almost certainly win every military battle and clash, but it is far less certain to win the political and economic war.”

Cordesman believes that the United States can only save itself from a clear defeat and the resulting loss of “face” in Iraq by renouncing at once all imperial objectives. As he declared in an interview for the Council on Foreign Relations in late November: “We’ve never said to the Iraqis that we won’t take their oil, that we won’t steal their economy, that we won’t establish military bases, that we’ll leave when an elected government asks us to. We’ve never said that any government that is elected is OK with us.” As he writes in *Playing the Course*, the United States should “conspicuously” abandon the following objectives: (1) using “Iraq as a tool or lever for changing the region”; (2) using Iraq as “a US military base”; (3) interfering with “Iraq’s independence in terms of its politics, economics, and above all oil”; and (4) blocking “total transparency” in the U.S. relation to the Iraqi economy. U.S. assurances he insists must include its explicit commitment to withdraw entirely from the Green Zone in Baghdad, which cannot be maintained as an imperial headquarters in a supposedly independent Iraq.

The United States, Cordesman advises, should narrow its objectives to the creation of a stable government backed up by an adequate Iraqi military force—even if the new political regime is only moderately better than that of Sadaam Hussein and even if openly antagonistic to the United States. If Washington can “succeed” even to this extent, he says, it can declare “victory” and get out within two years with a minimum amount of damage to its credibility as an imperial power. However, in case it should fail to create a stable political solution or to create an adequate Iraqi army within that period—as now appears most likely—the United States needs to start making plans immediately for what it will do in the case of a clear defeat. “Even ‘victory’ in Iraq,” we are told, “will be highly relative, and defeat,” which can occur in any number of ways as Iraq spins out of control, “will force the US to reinforce its position in the entire region.”

Even more important than the formation of a stable regime, from Cordesman’s standpoint, is the replacement of U.S. with Iraqi forces. “‘Iraqization,’” he writes, “either has to be made to work, or Iraq will become a mirror image of the failure of ‘Vietnamization’ in Vietnam: Coalition military victories will become increasingly irrelevant.” After a detailed assessment of Iraqi forces and training he concludes: “the Iraq military and security forces are now far too weak to take over the security mission and will almost certainly remain so well into 2005....The US can only ‘play the course’ effectively if it works out goals and plans with the Iraqi In-

**The continuing presence of U.S. troops will mean that the U.S. military will continue to take its bloody toll (which has already descended to systematic torture and the reintroduction of napalm, outlawed by the United Nations in 1980), and Iraqi opposition to the American “liberators” will only grow.**

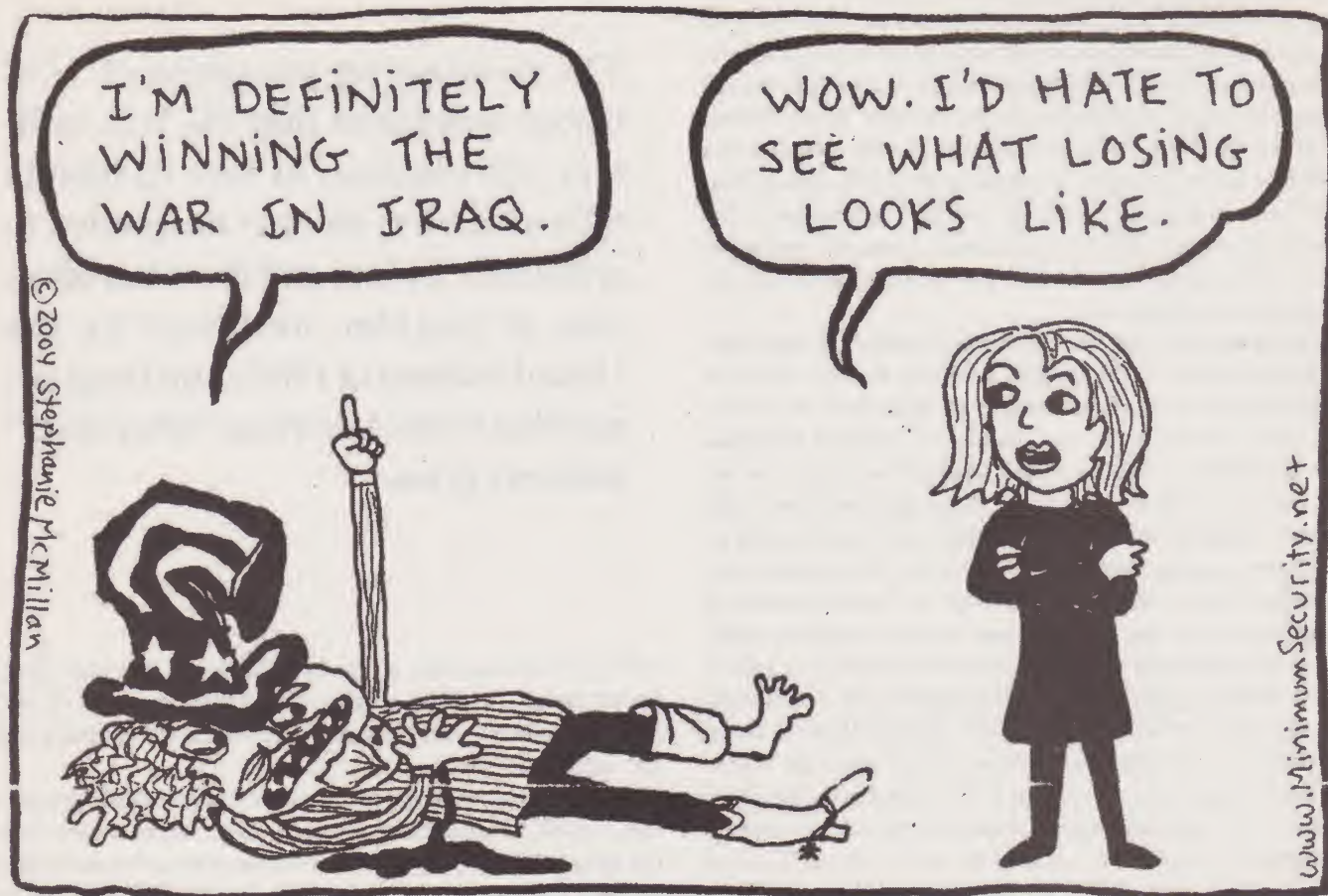
terim Government that go far beyond the 28,000 man [Iraqi] armed forces—and the roughly 40–55,000 man total of military, paramilitary, and National Guard—the US currently says are ‘required.’”

The truth is that the presence of 150,000 U.S. troops in Iraq, which has stretched available U.S. forces to the limit, has not been enough, even when supplemented by troops from Britain, to bring the country to heel. “The US has already learned that it can win virtually any direct military battle or clash, but it cannot secure the country....As in Vietnam, if the interim Iraqi government cannot win the political battle, U.S. victories in the military battles become irrelevant.” Given the political turmoil in Iraq and the difficulty of creating any political solution, or even avoiding the outbreak of civil war, Cordesman believes that the United States needs to concentrate on how to shore up its position in the remainder of the Middle East in the event of a defeat:

Fighting a counterinsurgency campaign is one thing; the US must not stay if Iraq devolves into civil war....No one can guarantee success in Iraq; or that Iraq will not descend into civil war, come under a strongman, or split along ethnic or confessional lines....[I]t is one thing to play the game and quite another to try to deal with defeat by reinforcing failure or “doubling the bet.” If it is clear by 2006 that the US cannot win with its current level of effort, and/or the situation serious[ly] deteriorates to the point where it is clear there is no new Iraq government and security force to aid, the game is over. There no longer is time to fold; it is time to run.

If forced “to run,” he says, the United States will have to offer reassurances to the rulers of the “friendly Gulf states and other Arab allies.” It will have to prevent any expansion of Islamic jihad in Afghanistan resulting from Islamic decla-





rations of “victory” in Iraq. At the same time the United States will have to keep Iran from intervening in Iraq. More pressure than ever will be placed on the United States to solve the Israeli-Palestinian problem. Finally, the threat to U.S. strategic position with respect to Middle Eastern oil will have to be planned for, requiring that the United States not withdraw from the Middle East but if anything step up its involvement.

No doubt is left in *Playing the Course* that the major issue for the United States in Iraq as in the Middle East as a whole is oil. Continual attacks on the oil pipelines by the Iraqi resistance have limited the flow of oil from Iraq, undermining one of the principal U.S. objectives, and highlighting the overall U.S. failure. In the event of a clear defeat and a U.S. withdrawal from Iraq, the oil situation will become even more critical. “The US,” Cordesman writes “can and must find substitutes for petroleum, but this will take decades. In the interim, the US and the global economy will actually become steadily more dependent on energy imports, and particularly on energy imports from the Gulf.” By the end of 2025 the industrialized countries alone, according to estimates by the U.S. Energy Information Agency (EIA) in its International Energy Outlook, 2004, are expected to increase their petroleum imports from OPEC by an additional 11.5 million barrels a day beyond the 16.1 million barrels a day in 2001, with the Persian Gulf supplying more than half of the in-

crease. North American imports from the Persian Gulf are expected to double over the period. Meanwhile, demand for oil from China and other developing countries is expected to increase dramatically. The strategic importance of oil for the world economy will accelerate accordingly.

In order to meet this demand for additional production, the EIA estimated that a further \$1.5 trillion would have to be invested in the Middle East between 2003 and 2030. The long-term potential for investment in the expansion of production in Iraq is greater than elsewhere since many oil analysts and institutes (for instance the Baker Institute, Center for Global Energy Studies, the Federation of American Scientists) believe that, in addition to its proven reserves of 115 billion barrels of oil, Iraq may have, in the 90 percent of its territory that remains unexplored, 100 billion barrels or more of additional oil reserves. (Estimates coming from some agencies, like the U.S. Geological Survey, are less optimistic, with median estimates of additional Iraqi reserves at 45 billion barrels.) According to Cordesman it is the enormous level of investment necessary for the expansion of Middle East oil production, which must occur in order to ensure adequate supplies for future consumption, that is the most pressing “practical problem” presented by the Persian Gulf from the standpoint of the global economy. Not only must such investments be made but they must then be protected. In this



regard it would not be easy for the United States to pull out completely from Iraq or to refrain from stepping up its involvement elsewhere in the Middle East if compelled to leave that country.

Relative to most analyses emanating from national security circles in the United States, Cordesman's *Playing the Course* has the advantage, we think, of being strong on realism. It is therefore reasonable to ask whether the powers that be in the United States can be expected to follow his prescription, beginning by renouncing all imperial objectives in Iraq. We think this is unlikely to happen. The operational phrase remains to "stay the course." On March 30, 2004, former secretary of defense under Nixon and Ford, James Schlesinger, and former U.S. ambassador to Russia and under secretary for political affairs under Clinton, Thomas Pickering (the two co-chaired the Council on Foreign Relations task force that produced the report *Iraq: One Year Later*), editorialized in the *Los Angeles Times* that Iraq should remain "above politics" and that the United States should "stay the course." The reasons they offered included preventing Iran from influencing Iraq; guaranteeing "long-term stability in the production and supply of oil"; blocking the rise of a new power in Iraq opposed to the United States; and avoiding a perception of American defeat that would serve to destabilize American power and its interests both in the Middle East and globally. In short, the imperial objectives for which the United States intervened in the region must be maintained at all costs.

Nothing coming out of Washington these days suggests that this dominant view has altered in any way. Although it is well understood among those at the top of the social hierarchy that a series of disasters may well await the United States in Iraq if it simply sticks to its guns, to not do so is seen as guaranteeing a still bigger disaster—a confession of defeat that will diminish the future U.S. capacity to make war at will on third world societies and thus to employ force directly as a means to promote its imperial designs. Moreover, there is still the question of Iraqi oil and who will control it. Thus in the ruling class view, even an absolute failure in establishing a stable political regime and the requisite military force to defend it in Iraq does not necessarily mean that the United States should get out. Thomas Friedman, the Op-Ed columnist on foreign affairs at the *New York Times*, whose views can usually be taken as a good barometer of establishment opinion, concludes a November 18, 2004, report from Iraq with the statement that "Without a secure environment in which its new leadership can be elected and comfortably operate, Iraq will never be able to breathe on its own, and U.S. troops will have to be here forever." The attitude here is that the U.S. occupation would need to continue endlessly in the case of a failure to realize the goal of a stable political situation in Iraq acceptable to the United States. Given the enormous Iraqi oil reserves Washington could decide that whatever costs it had to pay in Iraq would be amply rewarded in the end.

If the foregoing reading of the U.S. leadership's current determination to stay the course is right, then the failures to be experienced by U.S. imperialism in Iraq are likely to persist and be all the greater. The continuing presence of U.S. troops will mean that the U.S. military will continue to take its bloody toll (which has already descended to systematic torture and the reintroduction of napalm, outlawed by the United Nations in 1980), and Iraqi opposition to the American "liberators" will only grow. Meanwhile any Iraqi government that is elected under these circumstances will either have to be opposed to the U.S. occupation or lose any claims of legitimacy within Iraqi society. The entire U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq may be creating the conditions for a civil war, lighting a powder keg under the entire Middle East. To get an idea of just how serious this can be one has only to look at present Israeli arming and training of the Kurdish militias, with the object of then setting them—if the need should arise—against the Shiite or Sunni forces in Iraq. Israel's possession of hundreds of nuclear weapons poses the continual threat of the "Samson option" should that government perceive itself or its occupation of Palestine as seriously threatened.<sup>4</sup>

Wider speculation at this point would be foolhardy. But there is no doubt that in invading Iraq the United States opened the doors of hell not only for the Iraqis and the Middle East as a whole but also for its own global imperialist order. The full repercussions of the failure of the U.S. empire in Iraq have yet to be seen and will only become evident in the months and years ahead.

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#### Notes

1 Michael Klare, "The New Geopolitics," in John Bellamy Foster and Robert W. McChesney, ed., *Pox Americana* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2004), 51–56.

2 For a critique of this new conservative/military history of the war see Robert Buzanco, *Masters of War: Military Dissent and Politics in the Vietnam Era* (Cambridge University Press, 1996).

3 *The Pentagon Papers*, vol. 4 (Gravel edition) (Boston: Beacon Press), 668; Noam Chomsky, "Foreword" in Peter Limquenco and Peter Weiss, ed., *Prevent the Crime of Silence: Reports from the Sessions of the International War Crimes Tribunal founded by Bertrand Russell* (London: Penguin, 1971), 19; Dorothy Fosdick, ed., *Staying the Course: Henry M. Jackson and National Security* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1987), 190.

4 Seymour M. Hersh, *Chain of Command: The Road from 9/11 to Abu Ghraib* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 356–60, and *The Samson Option: Israel's Nuclear Arsenal and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Random House, 1991).





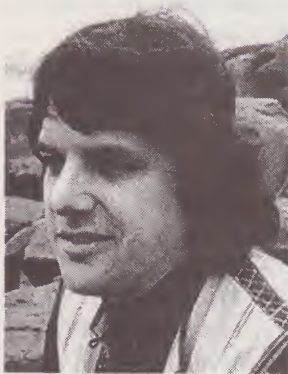
Photo: Samir Kasem



# The Noose Tightens: Science, Surveillance and the Culture of Control

By Derrick Jensen and George Draffan

*It is intolerable to us that an erroneous thought should exist anywhere in the world, however secret and powerless it may be. Even in the instant of death we cannot permit any deviation. In the old days the heretic walked to the stake still a heretic, proclaiming his heresy, exulting in it. Even the victim of the Russian purges could carry rebellion locked up in his skull as he walked down the passage waiting for the bullet. But we make the brain perfect before we blow it out. — George Orwell<sup>1</sup>*



In "The Noose Tightens" Derrick Jensen and George Draffan reveal how modern science and technology are contributing to increasingly intrusive and

draconian methods of surveillance and control. This essay is excerpted from the book **"Welcome to the Machine: Science, Surveillance and the Culture of Control"** available from Chelsea Green Press.

Web sites: [www.chelseagreen.com](http://www.chelseagreen.com)  
[www.derrickjensen.org](http://www.derrickjensen.org)

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There is nothing, no nonhuman, no human, no place, no action, no thought that is free from the gaze—or at least attempted gaze—of the watchers at the center of the Panopticon.\* Scientists will not be satisfied until they know everything, until they have entered and penetrated all the holes and corners of the world, until they have used technological tools and the mechanical arts—torture—to get the world to betray her secrets fully. And even then they will not be satisfied, because their eternal dissatisfaction has never had anything to do with knowledge or its lack, nor with the world, but with their own wretched and empty minds and hearts. Within our culture, based on the dyad of guard and prisoner, powerful and powerless, watcher and watched, those entitled to exploit and those to be exploited, there can be no limit to the attempt to control, the attempt to exploit. Those in power fear everything, so they must attempt to know everything. They say that *scientia est potentia*, but in their case *scientia derivare terror*. Their drive for knowledge derives from terror.

\* Derrick Jensen suggests modern technologies of surveillance are developments and extensions of utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon design for a prison in which all inmates are perpetually under full observation by guards at the center.



Let's talk about ECHELON. ECHELON is computer software that searches for specified keywords in e-mail, fax, and telex messages. The keywords cover military activities, drug trafficking and other crimes, the trade in embargoed goods or dual-use technology (that is, commercial goods that can also be used for military purposes), and economic activities.<sup>2</sup> ECHELON is used on the Platform network built in the 1970s and 1980s to fulfill the post-World War II communications intelligence agreement between the United States and the United Kingdom that divided the world into two spheres of influence: the United Kingdom would take Western Europe and the Middle East; the United States would take everywhere else. Canada, Australia and New Zealand were also party to the agreement, ensuring the global coverage needed for interception of international satellite communications signals.<sup>3</sup>

The communications to be intercepted aren't military; they are private and commercial.

Foreign intelligence routinely includes gathering facts about the economies and political situations around the globe, but there is evidence that ECHELON's surveillance of commercial communications is in effect industrial espionage benefiting corporations based in the home countries (the U.K. and U.S.). This (and the fact that permanent surveillance would be a violation of the European Court of Human Rights) concerned the European Union, which recently established a European Parliament committee to investigate the ECHELON system.<sup>4</sup>

For technical reasons, ECHELON currently has access to only a limited number of communications transmitted by cable or radio, whereas it can intercept telephone, fax, and data signals sent via satellite quite easily, because it has receivers in the right places: Puerto Rico, England, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Guam, Hong Kong, Canada, Cyprus, Hawaii, and in several locations in the United States (including Ft. Meade, the headquarters of the National Security Agency).<sup>5</sup> Technology to pick out certain voices from millions of telephone recordings is in development.

That's a lot of telephone conversations that can be intercepted, including your latest fight with your long-distance girlfriend, the time your cousin and her boyfriend had phone sex, those hours you counselled your best friend after the breakup of that really shitty relationship he was in a few years ago, your plans to blow up the Grand Coulee Dam, and the time you held up the phone to your cat's face so your niece could hear her purr.

So we return once again to the problem of bureaucrats everywhere: the prisoners are having so many conversations, and the guards have so few brains to make sense of them.

That's where ECHELON comes in. Because those in power (neither they, nor their army of agents) can listen in on every communication, much as they would like to (especially the one between your cousin and her boyfriend), ECHELON uses "sense-making" software to scan millions of messages for certain keywords.

For now, I guess you're still safe if you do not speak of blowing up the Grand Coulee Dam, but instead say, "The

grand birthday cake is ready, and the candles are about to be lit. As soon as they are lit, will you be ready to blow them out? It will all be very grand, and cool, eh?"

And I'll give you another hint: if you're going to have phone sex, make sure your partner isn't in another country: all international phone calls originating or arriving in the United States are routinely recorded.

Oh dear.

But if you really want to have phone sex, or talk about blowing up dams, maybe your privacy isn't in as much danger as the spooks wish—at least not in Germany. About ten million international communications go through Germany every day. About 800,000 of them are sent via satellite. The slowpokes at the German Foreign Intelligence Service are technically capable of putting less than 10 percent of those through a search engine.<sup>6</sup>

How will those in power maintain their control if the Germans are only scanning 75,000 communications per day?

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Let's talk about Carnivore. The FBI explains why it needs Carnivore: "The Nation's communications networks are routinely used in the commission of serious criminal activities, including espionage. Organized crime groups and drug trafficking organizations rely heavily upon telecommunications to plan and execute their criminal activities. The ability of law enforcement agencies to conduct lawful electronic surveillance of the communications of its criminal subjects represents one of the most important capabilities for acquiring evidence to prevent serious criminal behavior."<sup>7</sup>

Just for the heck of it, let's change a few words and see how this FBI statement reads: "The Nation's communications networks are routinely used in the commission of serious criminal activities, including espionage and the activities of large corporations. Organized crime groups, including government agencies, drug trafficking organizations, and corporations rely heavily upon telecommunications to plan and execute their criminal activities. The ability of law enforcement agencies to conduct lawful electronic surveillance of the communications of its criminal subjects represents one of the most important capabilities for acquiring evidence to prevent serious corporate and other criminal behavior." Can you imagine how different things would be if the FBI actually did investigate corporate criminals?

Back to the one-way world of the Panopticon.

Carnivore is a packet analyzer or "sniffer" box attached to Internet service providers' computers to record data on e-mail traffic. Let's say you're a suspect. If you checked my new book, *Welcome to the Machine*, out of a library using your own library card, or bought it from a bookstore using your credit card, you might be. Carnivore can record the names of the sender and recipients of all of your e-mail messages, as well as the messages' contents. It can compile a history of the web pages you visit. I'll bet that's the last time you visit [www.spankmetwice.com](http://www.spankmetwice.com).



From the perspective of the feds, it's not that big a deal; employers have long been recording what employees send and receive and where they go on the Internet. Why shouldn't law enforcement agencies be able to monitor criminals' and terrorists' e-mail, just like they tap telephones and open mail? As the FBI notes, "Electronic surveillance has been extremely effective in securing the conviction of more than 25,600 dangerous felons over the past 13 years. [We can wonder how few of those convictions involved those who run major corporations, even though dangerous products kill 28,000 Americans per year, exposure to dangerous chemicals and other unsafe working conditions in the workplace kills another 100,000, and workplace carcinogens cause 28 to 33 percent of all cancer deaths in this country.<sup>8</sup>] In many cases there is no substitute for electronic surveillance, as the evidence cannot be obtained through other traditional investigative techniques." In the old days, pen register devices could be used to record telephone numbers that were dialed from the suspect's telephone, and a trap and trace device on a telephone line could determine where a telephone call originated from. But all the FBI got was phone numbers, not the substance of what was being communicated.

Carnivore catapults the FBI from old-fashioned eavesdropper to the ultimate witness. There's no longer any debate about what a terrorist (or foreigner, or activist, or someone who's just plain fed up with the corporate oligarchy that pretends to be a democracy) said or didn't say. "Unlike evidence that can be subject to being discredited or impeached through allegations of misunderstanding or bias, electronic surveillance evidence provides jurors an opportunity to determine factual issues based upon a defendant's own words."<sup>9</sup> Facts and reality, not accusations. Hearing, not hearsay. After all, Rule 901 of the Federal Rules of Evidence requires that evidence be authenticated before it can be admitted as evidence in court.

It gets more interesting; the FBI is developing a Magic Lantern virus that allows Carnivore to collect passwords from computers.<sup>10</sup> Why should law enforcement agencies be prevented from accessing a criminal's computer system? Or, for that matter, maybe the computer system of someone who doesn't like the FBI.

And what will happen in a few years, when cable TV, telephone, and Internet service are all integrated? Drug dealers won't be able to buy hemp clothing online without being found out. Child pornographers won't be able to send dirty pictures illegally. Terrorists won't be able to use e-mails to put together their nefarious international plots (unless of course the terrorists are already at the center of the Panopticon). This layer of security is crucial, which is why the USA PATRIOT Act (passed in collective paranoid delusion six weeks after the 911 attacks) made it easier for the government to get

wiretapping authority, makes it clear that wiretapping authority applies to the Internet, and allows (actually, requires) banks and credit reporting agencies and stockbrokers and cable TV and Internet service companies to cooperate with law enforcement agencies by providing access to information about their customers—without fear of being sued by their customers for violating privacy laws.<sup>11</sup> We feel much more secure now, don't we?

Since terrorism, like capital, doesn't respect national borders, the cooperation has to be international, which is why thirty-three nations in the Council of Europe plus the U.S., Canada, Japan, and South Africa signed the international Convention on Cybercrime soon after 911. This treaty requires the member countries to pass laws against hacking, child pornography, and the theft of intellectual property. It requires each nation to give broad search and seizure authority to law enforcement authorities, including the power to force Internet service providers to cooperate with the use of surveillance technologies such as Carnivore. And it requires each nation's law enforcement agencies to cooperate with the agencies of other member nations.<sup>12</sup>

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**It seems those at the ACLU think the solution to government surveillance is to appeal to the government. Why don't we just ask those at the center of the Panopticon to turn off the lights in our cells? And while we're at it, why don't we ask them (nicely) to unlock the doors?**

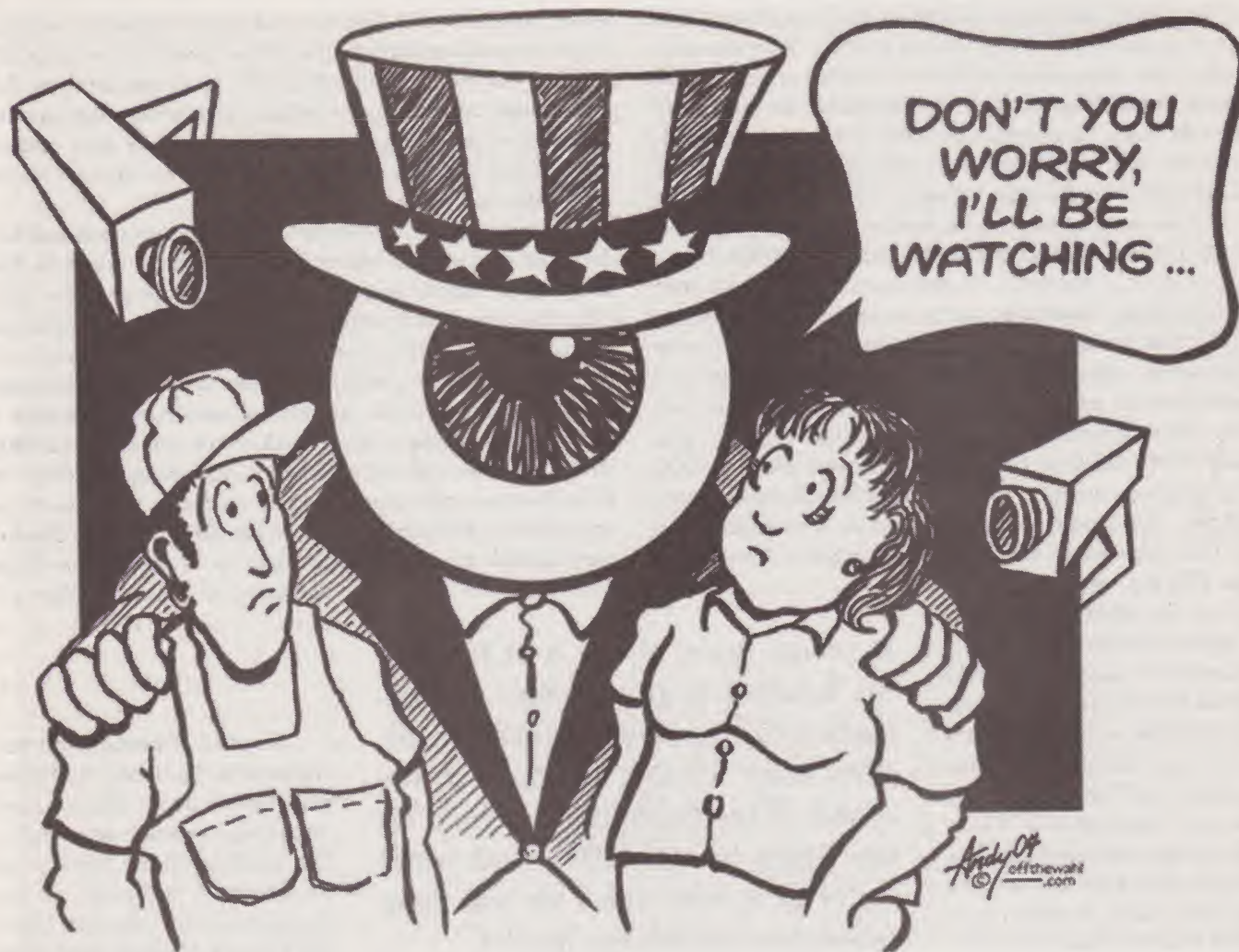
So often debates about surveillance in our culture boil down to arguments about which is more important: privacy or security. The headline on the Privacy and Technology webpage of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), for example, asks "Is the U.S. Turning Into a Surveillance Society?" and follows this rhetorical

question by statements to the effect that "Big Brother is no longer a fiction" and "The United States has now reached the point where a total 'surveillance society' has become a realistic possibility." Yet an ACLU spokesperson responds with the underwhelming "Given the capabilities of today's technology, the only thing protecting us from a full-fledged surveillance society are the legal and political institutions we have inherited as Americans."<sup>13</sup>

It seems those at the ACLU think the solution to government surveillance is to appeal to the government. Why don't we just ask those at the center of the Panopticon to turn off the lights in our cells? And while we're at it, why don't we ask them (nicely) to unlock the doors?

The ACLU claims that its report *Bigger Monster, Weaker Chains: The Growth of an American Surveillance Society*<sup>14</sup> "step[s] back from the daily march of stories about new surveillance programs and technologies and survey[s] the bigger picture."<sup>15</sup> Inevitably, since the ACLU is a union of lawyers, its "bigger picture" is made of laws, and its recommended solution is to "build a system of laws that can chain" the surveillance monster.<sup>16</sup> The ACLU's system would be built of privacy laws, the regulation of new technologies, and a





revival of the Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (protection against unreasonable search and seizure of persons, houses, papers, and effects).<sup>17</sup>

"These privacy gains [sic]," the paper states, "can be augmented and many threats to privacy can be overcome if citizens band together for reform and enlightened policy. The hope for progress, in sum, lies in the hands of engaged [I'd prefer enraged, actually] citizens who avail themselves of the legal, technological, and political opportunities to act in the marketplace and the political arena."<sup>18</sup>

We are, once again, supposed to appeal to our captors to give us a break. *You can destroy the world*, we say plaintively, *if you just leave us alone in our bedrooms*.

The appeal to laws is absurd. Let's take a keystone law in the efforts to protect people's privacy: the Privacy Act of 1974. Among other things, it forbids U.S. government collection of information on citizens it isn't investigating. Now, there's some logic and protection for you! And who will be investigated? In the words of former US Attorney General Edwin Meese, "If a person is innocent of a crime, then he is not a suspect." (This would be his version of, "So long as you

do what we tell you, you have nothing to hide, and nothing to fear.") In any case, according to a 1989 study by OMB Watch, the Privacy Act should apply to twelve U.S. government agencies maintaining 539 record systems containing 3.5 billion records.<sup>19</sup> An agency is exempted from the Privacy Act when the government decides to investigate you. Or if there's a national security issue at stake. Or if the government *buys* the information about you from a corporate source such as ChoicePoint or Axiom. The FBI has fingerprint and other data on tens of millions of Americans. The U.S. Internal Revenue Service and the Department of Health and Human Services maintain the name, address, social security number, and quarterly wages of everyone working in the country. Every state government maintains records of names, addresses, descriptions, and photographs of motor vehicle drivers.

The "dilemma" between "privacy" and "security" confronts a false problem with false choices. Since the foundation of the problem isn't the invasion by technological means of a legal right to privacy, law and technology are not the solutions. The problem is centralization of power, and the answer is the fundamental reconfiguring of power relations.



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The poet Antonio Machado wrote, "The eye you see isn't an eye because you see it; it's an eye because it sees you."

As those in power know more and more about you, or rather about your consumer/insurance/demographic fragments, you know less and less about them. Since 9/11, federal agencies have been directed to resist Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to see government documents. The October 12, 2001 "Ashcroft Memorandum" from the U.S. Department of Justice declared that if there were any "sound legal basis" for withholding information from FOI requesters, the agencies should withhold it, and that the Justice Department would back the agencies up. In November 2001, the Bush administration issued an executive order which seals presidential papers indefinitely, and allows former presidents and their descendants to review and reseal records. In March 2002, the White House ordered federal agencies to withhold information for national security reasons even when the Freedom of Information Act's exemption for national security does not apply. In March 2003, the Bush administration broadened what government information should be classified secret, and gave the CIA veto power over interagency decisions.<sup>20</sup> Since then government agencies, from the Environmental Protection Agency to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to the US Geological Survey, have been pulling information from public view. The Panopticon gets ever darker in the center.

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In the long-term, if there is to be one, humans must return to a sustainable way of life, albeit in a world depleted by the not-brief-enough blowout called civilization. In the short-term, humans face Smart Dust.

Smart Dust is a "self-contained, millimeter-scale sensing and communication platform for a massively distributed sensor network,"<sup>21</sup> a computer board equipped with a sensor, a microcontroller, and a radio. Currently Smart Dust is a third of the size of a credit card; using nanotechnology, it could eventually be the size of a grain of sand. The motes, as they call them, are able to "sense" temperature, humidity, vibration, air pressure, chemicals, and biological substances. You could use them to detect anthrax, say, but also to monitor the vibrations of factory equipment, and warn if the vibration gets to the point of damaging the machines. You could monitor the temperature in buildings. You could spray thousands of motes over a forest fire to monitor temperatures over the whole forest, with motes transmitting their data from one mote to the next back to a central receiving station. Dozens

of motes have already been put into trees on Great Duck Island off the coast of Maine to monitor bird habitat.<sup>22</sup>

Intel and the University of Berkeley are developing the Smart Dust motes. Other folks down at the University of California Los Angeles are working in the Center for Embedded Networked Sensing (CENS) to broaden the applications for these networked computer sensors. CENS wants sensors in roads, parking ramps, traffic lights, factories, airports, farms, hospitals, your car, your home, the groundwater, the plankton communities in the oceans. They want to extend the Panopticon everywhere. The head of CENS shares her dream: "The average person will be reliant upon and affected by these systems, but if we succeed, the systems will be relatively transparent or invisible. However, this vision is the Holy Grail, and there is a lot of work to do before we achieve it." Here is the place to insert the laugh of a mad scientist who knows she's backed by the full financial and police power of the state. She admits there may be some concerns, but she's willing to address them: "Ultimately, we need the participation of social scientists, as well, to explore the social implications of pervasive monitoring."<sup>23</sup>

Note whose participation she invites: *Social scientists*. Not citizens, or tribal elders, or any mumbo-jumbo-like spiritual ways of knowing how to deal with these devices. *Social scientists*. Fellow priests.

It's the same old story.

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During the U.S. Civil War, an unmanned hot-air balloon was designed to drop explosives. During the Spanish-American War of 1898, spy photographs were taken from kites. Hitler's V-1 "flying bomb" could carry a 2,000-pound warhead for 150 miles, and killed more than

900 civilians in World War II—a modest indication of what was coming. During the Cold War era, the U.S. used unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) equipped with spy cameras over Russia, Cuba, Vietnam and China. In the 1980s Israel used radio-controlled drones to attract enemy fire, thus locating their enemy's weapons. The Pioneer UAV was used by the U.S. military in the early 1990s to give their battleship commanders a bird's eye view of targets in Iraq.<sup>24</sup>

By the mid-1990s, the U.S. Predator drone was used over Bosnia to give generals (who don't like to get too close to battle) a view of the fighting in real time. The Predator was linked to GPS satellites, could fly for forty hours without refueling, and at an altitude of 20,000 feet was invisible to those on the ground. It was equipped with infrared radar that could detect heat sources at night, and "see" through clouds. It had a laser beam that locked onto targets, giving missile operators on the ground a sure shot.



By the time the U.S. invaded Afghanistan in 2001, the Predator was cruising at 65,000 feet, had a 450-mile range, and was transmitting pictures with infrared cameras via high definition color television. A ground team in a remote control station operated the unmanned plane by radio or satellite link. By the end of 2002, the U.S. Air Force had more than fifty Predators and was producing two more each month.<sup>25</sup>

Soon after the U.S. bombing of Afghanistan began, the Panopticon—we mean the Pentagon—bought up rights to all satellite photos of Afghanistan, thus making sure that it was the only agency that could actually see what was happening. By law the Pentagon has the right to exercise “shutter control” over civilian satellites launched from the U.S., but because such an exercise might have made the banned photos subject to the Freedom of Information Act, the Pentagon cleverly bought exclusive rights to the photos and secured an agreement from the company, Space Imaging, not to “sell, distribute, share or provide the imagery to any other entity.”<sup>26</sup>

The Marines used a forty-pound PackBot to search Afghan caves, “bunker-busting” cruise missiles to penetrate them, and “thermobaric” fuel-air explosives to suck the oxygen out of them—as well as good old-fashioned bombs and the “daisy cutter” bombs developed during the Vietnam War that spew enough napalm to kill everyone (by fire, suffocation, or even straightforward disintegration) within 600 meters. The plane that drops daisy cutters has to fly at 6,000 feet to escape the blast.<sup>27</sup> The Marines hope soon to be using a twenty-pound dune buggy called the Dragon Runner which will be able to cruise streets and enter buildings in urban combat; they already use laptop computers to receive video and sound from their Dragon Eye UAV.<sup>28</sup>

Just as the Panopticon was designed to spy for the purpose of punishment, it’s inevitable that these gizmos will be used for more than looking. The Predator was designed for spying, but has also been equipped with Hellfire missiles, and the Pentagon and the CIA have used them in Afghanistan, Yemen, and elsewhere to kill the machine’s enemies.<sup>29</sup> Hellfire-equipped Predators are flying over Iraq, and the U.S. is “quietly examining the feasibility of assassinating Hizbullah leaders linked to the deaths of U.S. soldiers and civilians in the 1980s.”<sup>30</sup> These are unmanned aerial vehicles, some flying without remote control, that can launch missiles at targets selected by computer. Abstract, inhuman, unaware, nonnegotiable, fast, silent, lethal: the panoptic ideal married to the aggressor’s demands. But there’s always room for improvement, if only more efficiency: “Predator B, designated MQ-9B by the U.S. Air Force and referred to as the Hunter-Killer, flies faster, higher and carries more weapons than the Predator.”<sup>31</sup>

The Helios vehicle is expected to be able to fly at 50,000 to 70,000 feet for months at a time. DARPA is also working on miniature UAVs for military surveillance, law enforcement, and “civilian rescue” operations. One mini-UAV, the Black Widow, has a six-inch wingspan and weighs two ounces. Maybe we’ll be able to buy them by the case at Costco.

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If you don’t want to wait for the ultra-lite version of the UAV’s, you can still take a gander at the DCHDs (Domestic Control Hover Drones: note the word *domestic*), which the U.S. government is already mass producing, and offering for sale to selected governments for \$178,000 each (that’s for the stripped-down model, the price the salespeople use to get buyers through the door: extras will easily bring the price up to \$350,000, not including destination fees). They’re shaped like a doughnut a little over three feet across, and weigh about forty-five pounds. They have a motor in the middle.

DCHDs are designed to hover about fifty feet up, but can go as high as five hundred feet. They can stay airborne for three hours without running out of fuel, and they can travel at fifty miles per hour. They can be controlled either by satellite or by vehicles on the ground. They come in your choice of an elegant black matte for night use and a matte white and sky-blue for those days you’re feeling a bit more festive. They are, of course, nearly silent, so quiet they cannot be heard from ten feet away.

Did we mention the word *domestic* in the title of the drone?

In case you do somehow see or hear the thing, and want to get away from the state-of-the-art video cameras, you might consider going inside. But that won’t help. The drone also has a thermal imaging sensor camera, allowing its controllers to find you through walls.

It also has microphones (state-of-the-art, of course, capable of picking out one conversation among many at more than a quarter-mile), and transmitters so that the controllers can speak to you directly. They can tell you to stop, they can tell you to approach the machine. They can ask you to place your identification card in front of the video camera.

And if you refuse, this Domestic Control Hover Drone is also equipped with a stun-gun.<sup>32</sup>

Did we mention the word *domestic* in the title of the drone?

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Technology is not neutral. It does not serve communities. Despite predictions that all these panoptic gizmos will soon be commercially available to you the “consumer,” the truth is that “they” (government and corporations) have the resources and capacity to collect and analyze information in order to control people (consumers, citizens, human beings), and you don’t. You’re not going to buy a predator drone to eliminate your bothersome neighbor or the oppressive police. You’re not going to be privy to the data gleaned from the RFID tags on your neighbors’ clothing.

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Of course technophiles and technoholics alike will trot out their obligatory arguments that technology is neutral, and that the effects of technology just depend on who uses it, implying that things would be different if only they and not George Bush (insert bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, the Demo-



crats, whoever) controlled predator drones. It's a stupid argument, as pointless in its own way as discussing whether some theoretical Christianity could possibly not commit genocide, some theoretical capitalism could possibly not consume the planet, some theoretical science could possibly not have as its primary goal the attempted control of everything. High technology, Christianity, capitalism, science: These all spring from the same mindset. So *of course* they will all move inexorably toward the same ends, with any pesky legal and moral objections only harrassing their ankles like fleas.

It's a moot point anyway, since the purpose of technology in our culture is to leverage power, and so it is inevitably driven by the ultimate in leverage, the military.

Computers and the internet were first designed by the military. Many pesticides were originally designed as chemical weapons against humans. Half the scientists and engineers are engaged in military-related research. Many of the technologies used for surveillance, tracking, detaining, and destroying were developed or funded by the military, or quickly adapted to police and military uses.

The director of MIT's computer science lab credited military-supported work with "half of the major innovations in computing, including breakthroughs in microcircuits and data-management systems."<sup>33</sup> This relationship between science and war continues in the marriage of machines and living beings. The U.S. Army has established an Institute for Collaborative Biotechnologies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, the California Institute of Technology, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The institute wants to find "better materials for uniforms or armor, faster and lighter computers and batteries and more elaborate sensors."<sup>34</sup>

Then there's the Biometric Consortium, which "serves as the federal government's focal point for research, development, test, evaluation, and application of biometric-based personal identification and verification technology."<sup>35</sup> By 2002, the Consortium had more than 800 members, making it sound like some grand community effort. But guess what? The Consortium was initiated and operates under the National Security Agency. The members are government agencies or organizations; those from "private industry and academia will be invited to the Consortium meetings in an observer capacity."<sup>36</sup>

Of course biometrics isn't just for military use. It has many civilian applications. Workplace and airport security. Fingerprinting in Stockholm public schools. The Los Angeles City Hall and the New York City Police Department.<sup>37</sup>

**Computers and the internet were first designed by the military. Many pesticides were originally designed as chemical weapons against humans. Half the scientists and engineers are engaged in military-related research. Many of the technologies used for surveillance, tracking, detaining, and destroying were developed or funded by the military, or quickly adapted to police and military uses.**

The Consortium isn't alone in promoting the measurement of life. The Biometric Interoperability, Performance and Assurance Working Group (BIPAW) supports "advancement of technically efficient and compatible biometric technology solutions on a national and international basis." The BIPAW Group consists of over ninety organizations "representing biometric vendors, system developers, information assurance organizations, commercial end users, universities, government agencies, national labs and industry organizations."<sup>38</sup> The Group's host is the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce's Technology Administration. NIST was founded in 1901 with a mission to "develop and promote measurement, standards, and technology to enhance productivity, facilitate trade, and improve the quality of life."

Standardization, utility, efficiency, interchangeability. How to destroy the world is as easy as A, B, C. This obscure little agency spends \$864 million a year employing 3,000 scientists, engineers, technicians, and support and administrative personnel, plus 1,600 guest researchers. And NIST partners with 2,000 manufacturing specialists.<sup>39</sup>

NIST is pretty upfront about the way it pervades our lives. It even says on its website: "Take a tour of your house and find out where the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has an unseen role."<sup>40</sup> They say this like it's a

good thing.

Where does the military fit in? Well, to answer that, let's ask where the BIPAW Group meets. At RAND's Washington Office (also known as Pentagon City) in Arlington, Virginia.<sup>41</sup> Is it a tax-spending government agency? Is it a money-making corporation? Is it a military contractor? Who knows.

Controlling physical access to buildings is one of biometric's more popular uses, with one estimate predicting a market of \$389 million by 2004.<sup>42</sup> That's just a fraction of the total market for biometrics, predicted to grow from \$116 million in 2000, to \$2 billion in 2006, to \$5 billion in 2010.<sup>43</sup> After all, if you can sell biometrics to measure schoolchildren, you can push it in the workplace too. Currently less than 1 percent of North American companies use biometrics to secure their computer systems.<sup>44</sup> Bentham's ghost would be proud to know that number is soon to rise.

The U.S. military asks, "What do biometrics do for me and how can I use them? Biometric recognition can be used in identification mode, where the biometric system identifies a person out of the entire enrolled population by searching the database for a match. A system also can be used in verification mode, where the biometric system authenticates a





identity from his/her previously enrolled pattern," will do anything for us. We already have our own technologies for doing this: they're called eyes, ears, memory, discernment, and a process called "getting to know a person." We can see, however, how mechanical (and thus far less sophisticated) technologies would be useful for those running a massive prison.

Further, note the sleight of mind that takes place in this sentence: "Only biometric authentication bases identification on an intrinsic part of a human being." They have continued the redefinition and reduction of the human to that which can be measured, sorted. And the statement is just plain false. I know who George is not because of his biometric measurements, but because of *who he is*. And certainly I would say that *who George is* includes what is intrinsic to his humanity. And what is intrinsic to one's humanity? Fingerprints? DNA? Sure. How about need for a community? Meaning? Love? A living landbase? Their definition has eliminated these from intrinsic humanity.

And then there's brain fingerprinting. As usual, it began as an application for the "criminal justice" system, once it was admitted

person's claimed identity from his/her previously enrolled pattern. Using biometrics for identifying and authenticating human beings offers some unique advantages. Only biometric authentication bases identification on an intrinsic part of a human being. Tokens, such as smart cards, magnetic stripe cards, physical keys, and so forth, can be lost, stolen, duplicated, or left at home. Passwords can be forgotten, shared, or observed.<sup>45</sup>

Funny, even if the technology were available to those of us in the outer ring of the Panopticon, we don't see how using high technology to "authenticate a person's claimed

as evidence in court. Now the inventor wants his method to be used in the "fight against terrorism"™, in the pharmaceutical industry, to measure the effectiveness of advertising, to root out insurance fraud, and as a tool for security screening.<sup>46</sup> It's security gone commercial.

It's scientific of course. It allows us—or rather them—to "measure scientifically" whether a person is a terrorist, spy, criminal, and so on, by finding specific information stored in a person's brain. It can reveal "terrorist training and associations." It can identify "trained terrorists with the potential to commit future terrorist acts, even if they are in a 'sleeper' cell and have not been active for years." It can "identify people



who have knowledge or training in banking, finance or communications and who are associated with terrorist teams and acts.” It can “determine if an individual is in a leadership role within a terrorist organization.”<sup>47</sup> This might even include the capacity to determine whether an individual is in a leadership role within a corporation. It sure would be nice to get some of those high-class crooks with training in banking, finance, or communications off the streets.

As in a lie-detector test, in brain fingerprinting a series of statements are made to a suspect. His brain responds to information he already knows. When the statement is something that only a criminal or the cops should know (since they are part of the same events), then a brain response “implies participation in the crime.”<sup>48</sup>

That’s all there is to it. How can you argue with that logic? There’s no human judgment needed! It’s Science! Why? Because “the entire Brain Fingerprinting system is under computer control, including presentation of the stimuli, recording of electrical brain activity, a mathematical data analysis algorithm that compares the responses to the three types of stimuli and produces a determination of ‘information present’ or ‘information absent,’ and a statistical confidence level for this determination. At no time during the analysis do biases and interpretations of a system expert affect the presentation or the results of the stimulus presentation.”<sup>49</sup> If there’s no human emotion or judgment involved, it’s *got* to be true. That’s one of the rules. And it’s been confirmed by the distinguished senator from Iowa: “It seems to me that if we are interested in making sure that the innocent go free, and that the guilty are punished, any technological instrument that can help us make a determination of guilt or innocence, we ought to know about it.”<sup>50</sup>

And you say we’re not already living inside of the machine?

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Orwell, p. 210.
- <sup>2</sup> European Parliament Temporary Committee, p. 35.
- <sup>3</sup> Bamford, p. 40, 403-404.
- <sup>4</sup> European Parliament Temporary Committee.
- <sup>5</sup> European Parliament Temporary Committee, p. 31-35, 55-59.
- <sup>6</sup> European Parliament Temporary Committee, p. 36.
- <sup>7</sup> U.S. FBI, Carnivore.
- <sup>8</sup> Mokhiber, p. 16-17.
- <sup>9</sup> U.S. FBI, Carnivore.
- <sup>10</sup> Pahati.
- <sup>11</sup> MacNeil/Lehrer.
- <sup>12</sup> The Convention on Cybercrime is cited in the bibliography. See also analysis at American Civil Liberties Union, The International Cybercrime.
- <sup>13</sup> American Civil Liberties Union, Is the U.S. Turning.
- <sup>14</sup> Stanley and Steinhardt.

- <sup>15</sup> ACLU Privacy & Technology webpage <http://www.aclu.org/Privacy/Privacylist.cfm?c=39> visited August 18, 2003.
- <sup>16</sup> From the preface of Stanley and Steinhardt.
- <sup>17</sup> Stanley and Steinhardt, p. 14-17.
- <sup>18</sup> Berman and Bruening.
- <sup>19</sup> Gandy, p. 55.
- <sup>20</sup> Reporters Committee.
- <sup>21</sup> Warneke. See also Matsumoto.
- <sup>22</sup> Great Duck.
- <sup>23</sup> McDonough.
- <sup>24</sup> Unless otherwise cited, the information on unmanned aerial vehicles is from NOVA, *Spies That Fly*.
- <sup>25</sup> Global Security.
- <sup>26</sup> Campbell; and Whitehouse.
- <sup>27</sup> Loeb; and Bhatia.
- <sup>28</sup> Krane.
- <sup>29</sup> Landay; and Pincus; and Hoyle; and Priest; and ABC News.com, Predator Drone Kills.
- <sup>30</sup> *World Tribune*, In Wake of Predator. The U.S. government had indicted one of the six men killed by a Predator drone’s missile in Yemen in November 2002 officials had been indicted for being involved in the October 2000 attack on a U.S. Navy’s destroyer. For an article about the legality of such killings, see Abdou, Death by Predator.
- <sup>31</sup> Global Security.
- <sup>32</sup> Martin.
- <sup>33</sup> Piller.
- <sup>34</sup> Pollack.
- <sup>35</sup> U.S. National Institute of Standards and Technology, Technologies.
- <sup>36</sup> Biometric Consortium, Background.
- <sup>37</sup> *BioMetriTech*, Precise Receives.
- <sup>38</sup> U.S. National Institute of Standards and Technology, Biometric Consortium Conference.
- <sup>39</sup> U.S. National Institute of Standards and Technology, General Information.
- <sup>40</sup> U.S. National Institute of Standards and Technology, NIST In Your House.
- <sup>41</sup> U.S. National Institute of Standards and Technology, Biometric Interoperability.
- <sup>42</sup> Shen, The “People” Element.
- <sup>43</sup> Guevin, Striking While The Iron.
- <sup>44</sup> Shen, Trends In Biometric Security.
- <sup>45</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, Biometrics Management Office.
- <sup>46</sup> Brain Fingerprinting Laboratories, About. <http://www.brainfingerprinting.com/about-bfl.php> visited June 18, 2003.
- <sup>47</sup> Brain Fingerprinting Laboratories, Counterterrorism Applications.
- <sup>48</sup> Brain Fingerprinting Laboratories, Scientific Procedure.
- <sup>49</sup> Brain Fingerprinting Laboratories, Scientific Procedure.
- <sup>50</sup> U.S. Senator Charles Grassley, quoted at <http://www.brainfingerprinting.com/HomePage.php> visited June 18, 2003.





Richard Mock

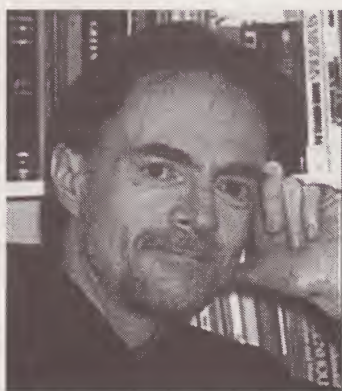
*When I was a boy in the countryside — fifty years ago and more — people [gardened] for self-sufficiency, for it would not have occurred to them to do otherwise. People were self-reliant because they had to be: it was a way of life. They were doing what generations had done before them; simply carrying on a traditional way of life. Money was a rare commodity: far too valuable to be spent on things you could grow or make yourself. It was spent on tools or fabric for clothes or luxury foods like tea or coffee. They would have laughed at a diet of store-bought foods. . . .*

—John Seymour, *The Self-Sufficient Gardener* (1979)



# Powerdown: Options and Actions for a Post-Carbon World

By Richard Heinberg



In "Powerdown" Richard Heinberg surveys the current ecological and economic trends which he believes are converging into a "perfect storm" scenario that will eventually result in some form of societal collapse. This essay is excerpted from the introductory chapter of Heinberg's new book **"Powerdown: Option and Actions for a Post-Carbon World"** available from New Society Publishers.

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I am in the cabin of an MD80 jetliner en route from San Francisco to Dallas. It is night, and as I look out the airplane window I see a dense web of lights spread upon the darkened landscape. It is a beautiful sight, and yet a profoundly disturbing one. Aside from streetlamps, nearly every one of those tiny lights emanates from a house, or from a car crawling across the landscape. Each tells an individual human story of struggle for survival and prosperity. And each is in some way connected back to a fossil-fuel energy source.

That source has its own story — one that began hundreds of millions of years ago, but that will end within the lifetime of children now living, as our fossil-fuel inheritance is burned once and for all. What will then happen to all of these lights — and to the lives to which they are tied?

It is a poignant thought, and an ironic one given the context in which it appears. I am looking out and down from the interior of a machine that is being forcibly thrust up into the sky — again by the burning of fossil fuels. The walls and fabrics that surround me are mostly made of fossil fuels. So too, to a large degree, is the computer on my lap.

As I think about my computer, the irony deepens. Just as I can look down from this airplane and take in a hundred square miles at a glance, I can take in information through my computer (when it is Internet-connected) and look down, as it were, on current events, human history, and human cultural geography as few humans could have hoped to do only decades ago.



And what a view one gets from this information pinnacle! A century ago our recent ancestors were riding in horse-drawn carts; today we have photos taken from the surface of Mars. We have landed humans on the Moon. We have covered huge expanses of our planet with seas of concrete on which to drive and park our billion cars. We have built skyscrapers and diverted great rivers. There are roughly as many humans alive now as existed cumulatively throughout all of the millennia prior to the Industrial Revolution. That means that a large proportion of all of the geniuses — and monsters — who have ever lived are alive today. And whenever one of these extraordinary individuals does something, we can hear about it instantly via our global communications networks.

Most of this edifice of modernity has been constructed within a single human lifetime: I still occasionally speak with people who can recall seeing the first automobile arrive in their town. And we are seeing the brief flowering of industrialism, in all its magnificence, with our own eyes, in real time. What a show!

But that's not all we see.

We have climbed very high, but also very far out on a spindly ecological limb. We may live, as Paul Simon once put it, in "an age of miracles and wonders," but we also live in a time in which several "storms" are colliding, as in the book and movie *The Perfect Storm*:

- **Resource depletion:** From the standpoint of the global economy, probably the most immediate threat comes from the depletion of fossil fuels (both oil and, in North America and Britain, natural gas). But fresh water resources, wild oceanic fish stocks, phosphates (necessary for agriculture), and topsoil are also dwindling.

- **Continued population growth:** While the rate of global population growth shows signs of slowing, the total reached six billion in 1998, and in the six years since that time we have added an additional 400 million humans — nearly the population of North America.

- **Declining per-capita food production:** For nearly the entire 20th century, food production outpaced population growth. However, world grain harvests for the past five years reveal a frightening trend: it appears that the trajectory of per-capita grain production has leveled off and may be beginning to fall, probably for a variety of reasons (including loss of arable land to urbanization, fresh water shortages, and bad weather).

- **Global climate change and other signs of environmental degradation:** Agricultural civilizations have developed over just the past few thousand years — an eyeblink in geological time. This has been a period characterized by a relatively stable, benign global climatic regime. Now that regime appears to be coming to an end, almost certainly as the result of a human-induced enhancement of the atmospheric greenhouse effect. It is unclear whether civilization can persist in a less favorable and less stable climate, as food production could be even further imperiled. If the world's sea levels rise significantly, as they are predicted to do as a result of the partial melting of polar ice, many coastal cities would be inundated.

Moreover, concerns are now being raised that cold, fresh water from melting Greenland glaciers may halt the Gulf Stream and plunge Europe and much of North America into a new ice age.

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- **Unsustainable levels of US debt and a potential dollar collapse:** Since World War II, the world has relied on the US dollar as the basis for monetary stability. Increasingly, the US has taken advantage of this situation by running up ever-larger trade deficits and more foreign-financed government debt. The current level of American debt — internal and external — is unprecedented and unsustainable, and US Treasury officials have made efforts in 2003 and early 2004 to gently lower the value of the dollar in relation to other currencies. However, if the dollar is devalued too much, other nations (including China and Japan) may decide to cease investing their savings in American stocks and Treasury securities; this in turn

could trigger a dollar collapse. In short, the global monetary system that has maintained relative stability for the past several decades appears to be fraying. Just when the nations of the world need to invest heavily in renewable energy systems, efficiency measures, and sustainable agricultural production in order to deal with problems previously mentioned, investment capital may disappear altogether in a global financial crisis.

- **International political instability:** The recent declaration by the US that it has a right to preemptive war, and its use of that "right" as a rationale for its invasion of Iraq, could potentially plunge international affairs into a new era of lawlessness. Henceforth, an attack by any nation on any other could be justifiable as self-protection against imagined future



threats. Meanwhile, the development and proliferation of new spacebased, electronic, genetic, and micro-nuclear weapons opens the possibility for ever deadlier forms of warfare, of which some have the potential to wipe out entire ethnic populations or to render whole continents uninhabitable.

These problems are related to one another in complex, often mutually reinforcing ways. Taken together, they constitute the most severe challenge our species has ever faced. They represent not merely a likely culmination of human history; in their ongoing and potential environmental impacts, they also may collectively signal one of the most momentous events in all of geological time.

This confluence of unprecedented achievements and threats — which most of us have learned to take for granted as being the ordinary state of affairs for humanity — is overwhelming when one contemplates it *in toto*, as if seeing from above. But usually we see it only one bit at a time, and we prefer *not* to think about how the parts may combine into one terrible whole.

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Everyone knows the classic scene from a dozen Westerns: a self-reliant, grizzled geezer is taken to see a doctor, perhaps for the first time in his life. He knows the prognosis intuitively and is prepared for the worst. "Tell me the truth, Doc."

That's how some of us feel when we read about climate change or the ongoing degradation of the world's coral reefs. *Give it to me straight: I'd rather know than live in denial.*

But most of the leaders of government and industry feel differently. They are more like the character Colonel Jessup, played by Jack Nicholson, in *A Few Good Men* (1992). In that film's climactic courtroom scene, Lieutenant Kaffee (Tom Cruise), cross-examining Jessup, insists, "I want the truth." Jessup shouts back, "You can't handle the truth!"

Nor, it seems, can we — at least not in the estimation of the masters of the corporate media. And so we tend to receive only sanitized versions of the news about our world. Occasionally, disturbing information does appear on television or in the newspapers, but the offending story usually shows up buried in the same broadcast, or on the same page, as others about relatively ephemeral political developments, local murders, the lives of entertainment stars, or scores in sports games.

A recent example: on May 15, 2003, nearly every newspaper in the world headlined the disturbing results of a study published that day in the prestigious British science journal,

*Nature*. In their article titled "Rapid worldwide depletion of predatory fish communities," Ransom A. Myers and Boris Worm had reported, "Our analysis suggests that the global ocean has lost more than 90 percent of large predatory fishes." Most of this depletion is attributable to the fishing industry. In many species, when populations are reduced beyond a certain point, recovery becomes impossible. Many fish species appear to be beyond, at, or close to that point of no return. With this news story, the world human community was effectively put on notice that the oceans may be dying.

That same day, other newspaper headlines included: "Menem Pulls Out of Argentina Race," and "Israeli Forces Kill Five in Gaza Raid." Argentinean politics and the ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestine certainly deserved whatever coverage they got that day, but how was the average reader to weigh the relative importance of the three news

items? In the following days there were more headlines about the Argentinean elections, and about further violence in occupied Palestine. But the story about the oceans largely vanished from view, and it is likely that only a tiny percentage of the population understood its importance enough to go out of their way to seek out follow-up items during the following weeks and months. Most people likely did not notice, for example, an article by Richard Sadler and Geoffrey Lean titled "Fish Stocks and Sea Bird Numbers Plummet as Soaring Water Temperatures Kill Off Vital Plankton," published on October 19th of the same year in the British newspaper, *The Independent*. As a result of global warming, "the North Sea is undergoing 'ecological meltdown,'" the authors reported, according to startling new research.

Scientists say that they are witnessing "a collapse in the system," with devastating implications for fisheries and wildlife. Record sea temperatures are killing off the plankton on which all life in the sea depends, because they underpin the entire marine food chain. Fish stocks and sea bird populations have slumped.

On the day it was published, this story was generally drowned out by "Pope Beatifies Mother Teresa," and "Blair Back at Work after Heartbeat Scare." Perhaps the folks in charge are right: maybe we *can't* handle the truth (though it's nice to be given the chance). Most of us do seem to enjoy our pleasant illusions, after all.

We get plenty of help in this regard from the relentlessly cheery entertainment industry, but also from politicians of every stripe. Trying to tell the public truly awful news is considered impolite — unless it is news about something that can be blamed on an opposing political group or some for-

**As a result of global warming, "the North Sea is undergoing 'ecological meltdown,'" the authors reported, according to startling new research. Scientists say that they are witnessing "a collapse in the system," with devastating implications for fisheries and wildlife.**





eign enemy. While leftists sometimes highlight certain ecological crises as a way of blaming corporations and right-wing governments, they often make sure to frame their complaints in a way that suggests that the problems can be solved by implementing a plan being put forward by liberal politicians or NGOs. Meanwhile, commentators on the political right revile "environmental alarmists" for allegedly exaggerating the seriousness of ecological dilemmas to suit their own ideological purposes.

So, as leftists make skewed and half-hearted attempts to discuss ecological crises, the attacks from the right have their intended chilling effect. Mainstream environmentalists these days often tend reflexively to pull their punches and temper their warnings. There are serious problems facing us, they say again and again, but if we just make the right choices those problems will painlessly vanish. When they are at their most baleful, environmental scientists tell us that we have the current decade in which to make fundamental changes; if we don't, then the slide into ecological ruin will be irreversible. On the first Earth Day we were told we had the decade of the

1970s in which to change course; but for the most part we didn't. Then we had the '80s . . . ditto. During the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio we heard that humanity had the '90s to reform itself; after that, there might be no turning back. There was still no fundamental change in direction, and here we are a dozen years on. I expect any day now to read an official pronouncement to the effect that we have the remainder of the first decade of the new century in which to make changes, *or else*. How many warnings do we get? Isn't it reasonable by now to assume that we are living on borrowed time?

The environmentalists' timidity about saying that we are past the expiration date on facile hope is understandable. No one wants to be viewed as Chicken Little. In *The Population Bomb* (1968), biologist Paul Ehrlich wrote that it was then already too late: "In the 1970s the world will undergo famines — hundreds of millions of people are going to starve to death in spite of any crash programs embarked upon now." Throughout the book, he made other specific — and, in retrospect, very unwise — forecasts. Of course, the Great Famine of the 1970s never happened. To be sure, millions of



people starved during that decade, but not in a dramatic enough way to justify Ehrlich's Jeremiad. Ever since then, whenever an environmentalist releases a new time-stamped warning, some commentator chirps, "We've heard it before: those prophecies of doom are always wrong. Why should we listen now?" Most environmentalists are scientists, and scientists are accustomed to couching their assertions in cautious terms anyway. Add to this the Chicken Little factor, and one can hardly blame them for shying away from plain talk about the inevitable consequences of our present pattern of existence.

In his immediate predictions, Ehrlich was indeed mistaken. But in principle he was undeniably correct: if we don't voluntarily reverse human population growth, nature will do it for us.

During the past three decades, industrial civilization has managed to pull a rabbit out of a hat: food production mostly

But of course the word *collapse* is fraught with dire implications. Many of us tend to think of a civilization's collapse as being sudden and complete, but this has usually not tended to be the case in past instances — ancient Rome, Minoan Crete, the Western Chou Empire, and the like. Collapses of historical societies have usually occurred over a period of 100 to more than 500 years. Also, collapse may or may not result in the destruction of a society's primary institutions. Often it is difficult to pinpoint the exact moment of the commencement of collapse, and the process may be clearly under way only decades after the society in question has reached its pinnacle of extent and achievement.

In the present instance, we are already seeing the first phases of collapse, as signaled by the disruption of global climate, the decline of oceanic ecosystems, energy resource depletion, and the peaking of per-capita global grain produc-

## **I take it as a given that we have already overshot Earth's longterm carrying capacity for humans — and have drawn down essential resources — to such an extent that some form of societal collapse is now inevitable.**

stayed ahead of population growth. We *seemed* to have dodged the bullet. But now, instead of the 3.5 billion humans who were around when *The Population Bomb* was published, we are 6.4 billion — a far larger target — and our ability to duck and weave is quickly waning. World per-capita grain production is falling and ecosystems are failing. Still, today almost no one talks about the need for population reduction in the courageous and straightforward way that Ehrlich did back in the late 1960s. No, we've learned to be more cautious and nuanced in our comments about the coming demographic holocaust.

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I take it as a given that we have already overshot Earth's longterm carrying capacity for humans — and have drawn down essential resources — to such an extent that some form of societal collapse is now inevitable. I intend the word "collapse" in a somewhat technical sense that is borrowed from the work of Joseph Tainter, author of *The Collapse of Complex Societies*. Tainter defines "collapse" as a substantial reduction in social complexity. This can occur either relatively quickly and chaotically, or in a more gradual and managed fashion. In the best case, this would amount to a planned contraction, in which population levels and per-capita resource usage would be scaled back dramatically over decades.

tion; however, it is unlikely that anyone now alive will see the end of the process. From a sufficiently distant temporal perspective, future historians will likely view the period from roughly 1800 to 2000 as the growth phase of industrial civilization, and the period from 2000 to 2100 or 2200 as its contraction or collapse phase.

Even if a reversal of growth is inevitable, the form it will take is as yet unclear, and will be determined by the actions of the present generation. We have weapons and other technological means to end human life forever. We also have the knowledge and skills necessary to build small-scale, decentralized, sustainable communities capable of providing a high level of human satisfaction and cultural attainment while degrading the environment to only a relatively minor extent over time.

I believe that attempting to maintain business as usual during the coming decades will merely ensure catastrophic collapse. However, we *can* preserve the best of what we have achieved, while at the same time easing our way as peacefully and equitably as possible back down the steep ramp of increasing scale and complexity our society has been climbing for the past couple of centuries. These are the options we face, and the sooner we acknowledge that this is the case and choose wisely, the better off we and our descendants will be.



# christian angst by terry everton

Stand tall and proud, America...It's time for another patriotic edition of *In Their Own Words* - the exciting new wartime segment that allows our freedom-fighting military personnel to tell the rest of us exactly why we should support their actions regardless!

We had a great day. We killed a lot of people.\*



\* Sergeant Schrumpf *NY Times* 29 March, 2003



# The Ghosts of 9-1-1: Reflections on History, Justice and Roosting Chickens

By Ward Churchill



In "The Ghosts of 9-1-1: Reflections on History, Justice and Roosting Chickens" Ward Churchill criticizes American Exceptionalism and provides a provocative analysis of the 9/11 attacks within the context of the

bloody history of U.S. actions responsible for the slaughter of millions around the world. This excerpt is an expanded version of his controversial essay "**Some People Push Back**" and appears in the introduction of Churchill's most recent book "**On the Justice of Roosting Chickens: Reflections on the Consequences of U.S. Imperial Arrogance and Criminality**" published by AK Press ([www.akpress.org](http://www.akpress.org)). We present Churchill's analysis as a whole in order to give APR readers a chance to understand the context of his remarks on 9/11 which have been widely decontextualized and denounced in the recent wave of attacks by conservative political commentators, who would like to demonize Churchill and have him removed from his professorship at the University of Colorado. They overlook the fact that if every academic making provocative political statements based on questionable scholarship was removed there would be many conservatives and liberals out of their jobs.

Note: Please check the APR web site ([www.altpr.org](http://www.altpr.org)) or the book for the fully annotated version of this essay.

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As ye sow, so shall ye reap.

Galations,  
6:7

September 11, 2001, will now and forever be emblazoned in the shorthand of popular consciousness as a correlation to the emergency dialing sequence, "9-1-1." On that date, a rapid but tremendous series of assaults were carried out against the paramount symbols of America's global military/economic dominance, the Pentagon and the twin towers of New York's World Trade Center (WTC), leaving about one-fifth of the former in ruins and the latter in a state of utter obliteration. Initially, it was claimed that as many as 5,000 U.S. citizens were killed, along with 78 British nationals, come to do business in the WTC, and perhaps 300 other "aliens," the majority of them undocumented, assigned to scrub the floors and wash the windows of empire.

Even before the first of the Trade Center's towers had collapsed, the "news" media, as yet possessed of no hint as to who may have carried out the attacks, much less why they might have done so, were already and repeatedly proclaiming the whole thing "unprovoked" and "senseless." Within a week, the assailants having meanwhile been presumably identified, *Newsweek* had recast the initial assertions of its colleagues in the form of a query bespeaking the aura of wide-eyed innocence in which the country was by then, as always, seeking to cloak itself. "Why," the magazine's cover whined from every newsstand, "do they hate us so much?"



## Ward Churchill Statement on the controversy surrounding his essay "Some People Push Back."

In the last few days there has been widespread and grossly inaccurate media coverage concerning my analysis of the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, coverage that has resulted in defamation of my character and threats against my life. What I actually said has been lost, indeed turned into the opposite of itself, and I hope the following facts will be reported at least to the same extent that the fabrications have been.

The piece circulating on the Internet was developed into a book, *On the Justice of Roosting Chickens*. Most of the book is a detailed chronology of U.S. military interventions since 1776 and U.S. violations of international law since World War II. My point is that we cannot allow the U.S. government, acting in our name, to engage in massive violations of international law and fundamental human rights and not expect to reap the consequences.

I am not a "defender" of the September 11 attacks, but simply pointing out that if U.S. foreign policy results in massive death and destruction abroad, we cannot feign innocence when some of that destruction is returned. I have never said that people "should" engage in armed attacks on the United States, but that such attacks are a natural and unavoidable consequence of unlawful U.S. policy. As Martin Luther King, quoting Robert F. Kennedy, said, "Those who make peaceful change impossible make violent change inevitable."

This is not to say that I advocate violence; as a U.S. soldier in Vietnam I witnessed and participated in more violence than I ever wish to see. What I am saying is that if we want an end to violence, especially that perpetrated against civilians, we must take the responsibility for halting the slaughter perpetrated by the United States around the world. My feelings are reflected in Dr. King's April 1967 Riverside speech, where, when asked about the wave of urban rebellions in U.S. cities, he said, "I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed . . . without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today — my own government."

In 1996, Madeleine Albright, then ambassador to the UN and soon to be U.S. secretary of state, did not dispute that 500,000 Iraqi children had died as a result of economic sanctions, but stated on national television that "we" had decided it was "worth the cost." I mourn the victims of the September 11 attacks, just as I mourn the deaths of those Iraqi children, the more than 3 million people killed in the war in Indochina, those who died in the U.S. invasions of Grenada, Panama and elsewhere in Central America, the victims of the transatlantic slave trade, and the indigenous peoples still subjected to genocidal policies. If we respond with callous disregard to the deaths of others, we can only expect equal callousness to American deaths.

Finally, I have never characterized all the September 11 victims as "Nazis." What I said was that the "technocrats of empire" working in the World Trade Center were the equivalent of "little Eichmanns." Adolf

The question was and remains boggling in its temerity, so much so that after a lifetime of spelling out the reasons, one is tempted to respond with a certain weary cynicism, perhaps repeating Malcolm X's penetrating observation about chickens coming home to roost and leaving it at that. Still, mindful of the hideous human costs attending the propensity of Good Americans, like Good Germans, to dodge responsibility by anchoring professions of innocence in claims of near-total ignorance concerning the crimes of their corporate state, one feels obliged to try and deny them the option of such pretense. It is thus necessary that at least a few of those whose ravaged souls settled in upon the WTC and the Pentagon be named.

At the front of the queue were the wraiths of a half-million Iraqi children, all of them under twelve, all starved to death or forced to die for lack of basic sanitation and/or medical treatment during the past ten years. These youngsters suffered and died because the U.S. first systematically bombed their country's water purification, sewage treatment and pharmaceutical plants out of existence, then imposed a decade-long—and presently ongoing—embargo to ensure that Iraq would be unable to repair or replace most of what had been destroyed. The point of this carefully calculated mass murder, as was explained at the outset by then-President George Herbert Walker Bush, father of the current Oval Office occupant, has been to impress upon the Iraqi government—and the rest of the world as well—that "what we say, goes."

In other words, though no less bluntly: "Do as you're told or we'll kill your babies."

Much has been made, rightly enough, of how U.S. governmental agencies, corporate media and academic elites collude to provide only such information as is convenient to the status quo. It is thus true that there is much of which the public is unaware. No such excuse can be advanced with respect to the fate of Iraq's children, however. Not only was the toll publicly predicted before U.S. sanctions were imposed, but two high UN officials, including Assistant Secretary General Denis Halliday, have resigned in protest of what Halliday described in widely-reported statements as "the policy of deliberate genocide" they reflected. Asked by an interviewer on *60 Minutes* in 1996 whether the UN's estimate of child fatalities in Iraq was accurate, U.S. Ambassador to the UN *cum* Secretary of State Madeleine Albright confirmed it before a national television audience.

"We've decided," Albright went on in a remark prominently displayed in the *New York Times* and most other major newspapers, "that it's worth the cost" in lives extracted from brown-skinned toddlers to "set an example" so terrifying in its implications that it would compel planetary obedience to America's dictates in the years ahead. Such were the official terms defining the "New World Order" George Bush the elder had announced in 1991.

One wonders how information about what was happening in Iraq could have been made much clearer or more readily accessible to the general public. Claims that average Americans "didn't know" what was being done in their name are thus rather less than credible. In reality, Americans by-and-large greeted Albright's haughty revelation of genocide with yawns and blank stares, returning their attention almost immediately to what they considered far weightier matters: the Dow Jones and American League batting averages, for instance, or pursuit of the perfect cappuccino. Braying like donkeys into their eternal cellphones, they went right on arranging their stock transfers and real estate deals and dinner



dates, conducting business as usual, never exhibiting so much as a collective flicker of concern.

In effect, the U.S. citizenry as a whole was endowed with exactly the degree of ignorance it embraced. To put it another way, being ignorant is not synonymous with being uninformed. It is instead to be informed and then *ignore* the information. There is a vast difference between not knowing and not caring, and, if Good Americans have difficulty appreciating the distinction, it must be borne in mind that there are others in the world who are quite unburdened by such intellectual impairments. They, beginning with those most directly targeted at any given moment for subjugation or eradication at the hands of American "peacekeepers," know above all else that professions of ignorance inherently preclude claims of innocence in such circumstances.

There was a time, oddly enough, when it could be said that the U.S. stood at the forefront of those endorsing the same principle. How else to explain its solemn invocation at the time of the Nuremberg Trials of a collective guilt inhering in the German populace itself? One would do well to recall that the crimes attributed by Americans to Good Germans were that they'd celebrated a New Order of their own, looking away while the Nazi crimes were committed, never attempting to meet the legal/moral obligation of holding their government to even the most rudimentary standards of human decency. For these sins, it was said, they, the Germans, civilians as well as military personnel, richly deserved the death and devastation that had been rained upon them by America's "Mighty Eighth" Air Force and its British counterpart. In sum, they'd "brought it on themselves."

### Some People Push Back

To be sure, I've "oversimplified," committed "reductionism" and "compared apples and oranges" in offering the preceding analogy. That was Germany, after all, while this is the U.S. The situation here is of course much more "complex." America today, unlike Germany a half-century ago, is a "democratic," "multicultural" society. Its courts offer a prospect of "due process" in dispute resolution absent under the Nazis. Most importantly, unlike the situation in Nazi Germany, there is a discernible opposition in the U.S., an active counterforce to the status quo through which progressive social, political and economic change can ultimately be accomplished without resort to the crudities of bullets and bombs, never mind the scale of atrocity witnessed on 9-1-1.

These things duly remarked, it must also be said that the implications embodied in such counterforces must be tested by their effectuality rather than their mere existence. On this score, the practical distinction between formal and functional democracy has been remarked by numerous analysts over the years. As to the merits of the U.S. judicial system, one might do well to begin any assessment by asking Leonard Peltier, Mumia Abu-Jamal, Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt), Dhoruba Bin Wahad or any of the hundreds of other political activists who have been entombed on false charges or are now serving dramatically inequitable sentences in American prisons. One might ask as well those sent to death row on racial grounds, or who number among the two million predominately dark-skinned people—a proportion of the population larger than that of any country save Russia—consigned to the sprawling archipelago of forced labor camps forming the U.S. "prison-industrial" complex.

Eichmann was not charged with direct killing but with ensuring the smooth running of the infrastructure that enabled the Nazi genocide. Similarly, German industrialists were legitimately targeted by the Allies.

It is not disputed that the Pentagon was a military target, or that a CIA office was situated in the World Trade Center. Following the logic by which U.S. Defense Department spokespersons have consistently sought to justify target selection in places like Baghdad, this placement of an element of the American "command and control infrastructure" in an ostensibly civilian facility converted the Trade Center itself into a "legitimate" target. Again following U.S. military doctrine, as announced in briefing after briefing, those who did not work for the CIA but were nonetheless killed in the attack amounted to "collateral damage." If the U.S. public is prepared to accept these "standards" when they are routinely applied to other people, they should be not be surprised when the same standards are applied to them.

It should be emphasized that I applied the "little Eichmanns" characterization only to those described as "technicians." Thus, it was obviously not directed to the children, janitors, food service workers, firemen and random passers-by killed in the 911 attack. According to Pentagon logic, were simply part of the collateral damage. Ugly? Yes. Hurtful? Yes. And that's my point. It's no less ugly, painful or dehumanizing a description when applied to Iraqis, Palestinians, or anyone else. If we ourselves do not want to be treated in this fashion, we must refuse to allow others to be similarly devalued and dehumanized in our name.

The bottom line of my argument is that the best and perhaps only way to prevent 9-1-1-style attacks on the U.S. is for American citizens to compel their government to comply with the rule of law. The lesson of Nuremberg is that this is not only our right, but our obligation. To the extent we shirk this responsibility, we, like the "Good Germans" of the 1930s and '40s, are complicit in its actions and have no legitimate basis for complaint when we suffer the consequences. This, of course, includes me, personally, as well as my family, no less than anyone else.

These points are clearly stated and documented in my book, *On the Justice of Roosting Chickens*, which recently won Honorary Mention for the Gustavus Myer Human Rights Award for best writing on human rights. Some people will, of course, disagree with my analysis, but it presents questions that must be addressed in academic and public debate if we are to find a real solution to the violence that pervades today's world. The gross distortions of what I actually said can only be viewed as an attempt to distract the public from the real issues at hand and to further stifle freedom of speech and academic debate in this country.

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A petition to defend Ward Churchill and protect academic freedom can be viewed at:

[www.coloradoaim.org/wardpetition.htm](http://www.coloradoaim.org/wardpetition.htm)

The original essay "Some People Push back" can be read at: [www.greenanarchy.org/zine/GA08/pushback.php](http://www.greenanarchy.org/zine/GA08/pushback.php)



Turning to America's vaunted "opposition," we find record of not a single significant demonstration protesting the wholesale destruction of Iraqi children. On balance, U.S. "progressives" have devoted far more time and energy over the past decade to combating the imaginary health effects of "environmental tobacco smoke" and demanding installation of speed-bumps in suburban neighborhoods—that is, to increasing their *own* comfort level—than to anything akin to a coherent response to the U.S. genocide in Iraq. The underlying mentality is symbolized quite well in the fact that, since they were released in the mid 1990s, Jean Baudrillard's allegedly "radical" screed, *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*, has outsold Ramsey Clark's *The Impact of Sanctions on Iraq*, prominently subtitled *The Children are Dying*, by a margin of almost three-to-one.

The theoretical trajectory entered into by much of the American left over the past quarter-century exhibits a marked tendency to try and justify such evasion and squalid self-indulgence through the expedient of rejecting "hierarchy, in all its forms." Since "hierarchy" may be taken to include "[any]thing resembling an order of priorities," we are faced thereby with the absurd contention that all issues are of equal importance (as in the mindless slogan, "There is no hierarchy to oppression. From there, it becomes axiomatic that the "privileging" of any issue over another—genocide, say, over fanny-pinching in the workplace—becomes not only evidence of "elitism," but of "sexism," and often "homophobia" to boot (as in the popular formulation holding that Third World anti-imperialism is inherently nationalistic, and nationalism is inherently damaging to the rights of women and gays).

Having thus foreclosed upon all options for concrete engagement as mere "reproductions of the relations of oppression," the left has largely neutralized itself, a matter reflected most conspicuously in the applause it bestowed upon Homi K. Bhabha's preposterous 1994 contention that writing, which he likens to "warfare," should be considered the only valid revolutionary act. One might easily conclude that had the "opposition" not conjured up such "postmodernist discourse" on its own initiative, it would have been necessary for the status quo to have invented it. As it is, postmodernist theorists and their postcolonialist counterparts are finding berths at elite universities at a truly astounding rate.

To be fair, it must be admitted that there remain appreciable segments of the left which do not subscribe to the sophistries imbedded in postmodernism's "failure of nerve." Those who continue to assert the value of direct action, however, have for the most part so thoroughly constrained themselves to the realm of symbolic/ritual protest as to render themselves self-nullifying. One is again hardpressed to decipher whether this has been by default or design. While such comportment is all but invariably couched in the lofty—or sanctimonious—terms of "principled pacifism," the practice of proponents often suggests something far less noble.

Nowhere was this more apparent than during the 1999 mass demonstrations against a meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Seattle. There, notwithstanding much vociferous rhetoric denouncing the spiraling human and environmental costs

attending the American-led drive to economic globalization, droves of "responsible" protesters served literally as surrogates for the police, forming themselves into cordons to protect major corporate facilities from suffering such retaliatory "violence" as broken windows. Although this posture was ostensibly adopted because of a commitment to *nonviolence* on the part of the volunteer cops, adherence to such ideals was peculiarly absent when it came to their manhandling of Black Block anarchists bent upon inflicting minor property damage or otherwise disrupting business as usual in some material sense. In truth, the only parties who appear to have been immunized against the physical impositions of the self-anointed "peacekeepers" were the police, WTO delegates, and other government/corporate officials.

Tellingly, although the fact goes mostly unmentioned by the "peaceful protesters" involved, no less than President Bill Clinton went on television in the aftermath to complement that "great majority of the demonstrators" who, he said, did nothing at all to "interfere with the rights" of WTO delegates to coordinate an acceleration of the planetary rape and mass murder the demonself-strations were supposedly intended to forestall. Over the next several months, meetings and workshops were conducted among

"dissidents" nationwide, most of them dedicated in whole or in part to devising ways of better containing and controlling Black Blockers at future demonstrations. For its part, the government formed a special state-local-federal "counterterrorism task force" in Oregon, targeting anarchists in the cities of Eugene and Portland—each reputedly a locus of Black Block activity—for "neutralization."

A tidier and more convivial arrangement is hard to imagine. All that was missing was something resembling a realization by participants on either side of the equation that their waltz could be continued neither indefinitely nor with impunity.

So intoxicated had they been rendered by their mutual indulgence in the narcotic of American exceptionalism, that they'd lost all touch with laws as basic and natural as cause and effect. "Out there," in the neocolonial hinterlands where the body count of the New World Order must mostly be tallied, no one really cares a whit that a sector of the beneficiary population has chosen to bear a sort of perpetual "moral witness" to the crimes committed against the Third World. What they *do* care about is whether such witnesses translate their professions of "outrage" into *whatever* kinds of actions may be necessary to actually put an end to the horror.

When such action is not forthcoming from within the perpetrator society itself—when in fact those comprising that society's purported opposition can be seen to have mostly *joined* in enforcing at a bedrock level the very order from whence mass murder systematically emanates—a different sort of rule must inevitably come to govern. There is nothing mysterious in this. The proposition is so obvious, uncomplicated and fundamentally just that it has been often and straightforwardly articulated, usually to the accompaniment of cheers, before mass audiences in the U.S. Recall as but one example the line delivered by the actor Lawrence Fishburn, portraying Prohibition-era Harlem gangster

**There is a vast difference between not knowing and not caring, and, if Good Americans have difficulty appreciating the distinction, it must be borne in mind that there are others in the world who are quite unburdened by such intellectual impairments.**



Bumpy Johnson in a 1984 movie, *The Cotton Club*: "When you push people around, *some* people [will eventually] push back."

As the makeup of the historical figure upon whom Fishburn's celluloid character was based should have made equally clear, those finally forced into doing the (counter)pushing are unlikely to be "nice guys." Indeed, whoever they might otherwise have been or become, the sheer and unrelenting brutality of the circumstances compelling their response is all but guaranteed to have twisted and deformed their outlooks in some truly hideous ways. Be it noted, moreover, that there is an undeniable symmetry involved when their response is in-kind. "What goes around comes around," it has been said. In the end, "Karma is unavoidable." So it was on September 11, 2001.

### Trails of Tears

True, my depiction of the situation remains reductionist. This is so in many respects, perhaps, but no doubt most importantly because the ghosts of Iraq's wasted children were by no means alone in their haunting. There were others present on 9-1-1, *many* others, beginning with the 800,000 Iraqi adults—the great majority of them either elderly or pregnant—known to have died along with their youngsters as a direct result of U.S. sanctions. This makes a total of 1.3 million dead among a population of fewer than twenty million in the decade since the Gulf War supposedly ended. To these must be added another 150,000-or-so Iraqi civilians written off as "collateral damage" during the massive U.S. aerial bombardment defining the war itself.

Then there were the soldiers, conscripts mostly, butchered in the scores of thousands as they fled northward along what became known as the "Highway of Death," out of combat, in full compliance with U.S. demands that they evacuate Kuwait, effectively defenseless against the waves of aircraft thereupon hurled at them by cowards wearing American uniforms. Also at hand were some 10,000 Iraqi guardsmen retreating along a causeway outside Basra, killed in another "turkey shoot" conducted by U.S. forces 24 hours *after* the "war-ending ceasefire" had taken effect. Untold thousands of others were there as well, terrified teenagers, many of them wounded, refused quarter by advancing American troops who disparaged them as "sand niggers," then buried them alive while they pleaded for mercy, using bulldozers specially prepared for the task.

Neither the litany nor the count ends with the suffering of Iraq, of course. Present on 9-1-1 were the many thousands of Palestinians shredded over the years by Israeli pilots flying planes purchased with U.S. funds and dropping cluster bombs manufactured in/provided by the USA. There, too, were the "Intifadists," rockthrowing—or simply fist-waving—Palestinian kids mowed down with numbing regularity by Israeli troops firing hyperlethal ammunition from American-supplied M-16 rifles. Also in the throng were the hundreds massacred in refugee camps like Sabra and Shatila under authority of Israel's one-time defense minister, now prime minister, and always fulltime U.S. accessory, Ariel Sharon. Countries, no less than individuals, will—indeed, must—be judged not only by what they do but by the company they elect as a matter of policy to keep and support (ask the Taliban).

Compared to others with whom the U.S. has bonded since 1950, moreover, the appalling Mr. Sharon might well purport to saintliness. Consider the 300,000 Guatemalans exterminated after the CIA destroyed their democratically-elected government in

1954, installing in its stead a brutal military junta dedicated to making the country safe for the operations of U.S. corporations. Consider, too, the million or more Indonesian victims of a CIA-sponsored 1965 coup in which the Sukarno government was overthrown in favor of a military régime headed by Suharto, a maneuver that led unerringly—and with uninterrupted American support—to the recent genocide in East Timor. The ghosts of these victims were surely present, along with their Iraqi and Palestinian counterparts, on 9-1-1.

No less apparent are the reasons for the presence of the multitudes subjected to numerically lesser but nonetheless comparable carnage by an array of other U.S. client governments: persons tortured and murdered by Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's secret police, the SAVAK, after the CIA-engineered dissolution of Iran's parliamentary system in 1954; more thousands "disappeared" and summarily executed after the CIA-instigated 1973 overthrow of Chile's Allende government and installation of a military junta headed by Augusto Pinochet; thousands more murdered by agents of the ghastly "public safety" programs implemented with U.S. funding and supervision throughout South America during the 1960s; still more who lost their lives to the U.S.-sponsored and orchestrated "contra" war against Nicaragua's Sandinista government during the mid-1980s.

Although the list of such malignancies is still and rapidly lengthening, it is appropriate that we return to the roster of those whose fates were sealed by the U.S. in a far more direct and exclusive fashion. Of them, there is certainly no shortage. They include, quite conspicuously, three million Indochinese, perhaps more, exterminated in the course of America's savage and sustained assaults on Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia during the 1960s and early 1970s. To those claimed by the war itself must be added the ongoing toll taken by America's "stay behind" legacy of landmines, unexploded artillery rounds and cluster bomblets, as well as an environment soaked in carcinogenic-mutogenic defoliants. Added, too, must be those lost to the U.S. default on its pledge to pay reparations of \$4 billion in exchange for being allowed to escape with "honor" from a war it started but could not win. America has never been known for paying its bills, either literally or figuratively.

Present, too, on 9-1-1 were the uncounted thousands of non-combatants massacred by U.S. troops at places like No Gun Ri amidst the "police action" conducted in Korea during the early 1950s. As well, there were the hundreds of thousands of Japanese civilians deliberately and systematically burned alive by the Army Air Corps during its massive fire raids on Tokyo and other cities conducted towards the end of World War II. And, to be sure, these victims were accompanied by the dead of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, indiscriminately vaporized by American nuclear bombs in 1945—or left the slow, excruciating deaths resulting from irradiation—not to any military purpose, but rather to the end that the U.S. might demonstrate the technological supremacy of its "kill-power" to anyone thinking of questioning its dominance of the postwar world. For all its official chatter about the necessity of preventing weapons of mass destruction from "falling into the hands of rogue states and terrorists," the U.S. remains the only country ever to use nuclear devices for that reason.

Then there were the Filipinos, as many as a million of them, "extirpated" by American troops at the dawn of the twentieth century, as the U.S., having wrested their island homeland from



**Why should “they” hate “us”? The very question is on its face absurd, delusional, revealing of an aggregate detachment from reality so virulent in its evasiveness as to be deemed clinically pathological.**

the relatively benign clutches of the Spanish Empire, set about converting the Philippines into a colony of its own. Nor was there an absence of “Indians,” people indigenous to America itself, whose unending agony was enunciated in the silent eloquence of several hundred Lakota babies, mothers and old men dumped into a mass grave—a crude trench, really—after they’d been annihilated by soldiers firing Hotchkiss guns at Wounded Knee in 1890. Punctuating their statement were the victims of a hundred comparable slaughters stretching back in an unbroken line through Weaverville and Yrika to the Washita and Sand Creek, through the Bad Axe to Horseshoe Bend and beyond, all the way to General John Sullivan’s campaign against the Senecas in 1794, a grisly affair from which his men returned proudly attired in leggings crafted from the skins of their victims.

Intermixed with those massacred wholesale were many thousands of native people slain piecemeal, hunted down as sport or for the bounties placed upon their scalps at one time or another by every state and territory in the Lower Forty-Eight. Many more thousands could be counted among those who’d perished along the routes of the death marches—the Cherokee “Trail of Tears,” for instance, and the “Long Walk” of the Navajos—upon which they were forced at bayonet-point, “removed” from their land so that it might be repopulated by a self-anointed superior race busily importing itself from Europe. Then there were the millions dead of disease, smallpox mostly, with which they’d been infected, often deliberately, as a means of causing them more literally to “vanish.”

In the end, the grim column of stolen lives reached such length that it threatened to disappear into the distance. Towards its end, however, could still be glimpsed a scattering of Wappingers, a small people now mostly forgotten, eradicated by the Dutch in their founding of New Amsterdam, now New York, the victims’ severed heads used for a jolly game of kickball along a street near which the WTC would later stand. As for the street upon which this gruesome event took place, it is now named in honor of a prominence by which it would long be flanked, the wall enclosing the city’s once-thriving slave market. The lucrative trade in African flesh—that, and extraction of discount labor from such flesh—were, after all, ingredients nearly as vital to forming the U.S. economy as was the “clearing” and expropriation of native land.

Thus, the millions lost to the Middle Passage took their places among their myriad Asian and Native American cousins. They, and all who perished under slavers’ whips after being sold at auction in the “New World,” were worked or tortured to death on chain gangs after slavery was formally abolished, or were among the thousands lynched during a century-long “festival of violence” undertaken by white Americans—there were six million active members of the Ku Klux Klan in 1929—to ensure that ostensibly “free” blacks remained “in their place” of subjugation.

The atrocious record of apartheid South Africa always came in a feeble second to the malignancies of Jim Crow.

Intermixed, too, were a great host of others: the thousands of Chinese coolies imported during the nineteenth century, none of them standing “a Chinaman’s chance” of surviving the brutal conditions into which they were impressed while laying track for America’s railroads and digging its deep shaft mines throughout the West; the millions of children consigned in each generation to grinding poverty and truncated lifespans across America’s vast sprawl of ghettos, barrios, Indian reservations and migrant labor camps; millions upon millions more assigned the same or worse in the neocolonies of the Third World, the depths of their misery dictated by an unremitting demand for superprofits with which to fuel America’s “economic miracle.” Truly, there seems no end to it.

Why should “they” hate “us”? The very question is on its face absurd, delusional, revealing of an aggregate detachment from reality so virulent in its evasiveness as to be deemed clinically pathological. Setting aside the wholly-contrived “confusion” professed in the aftermath as to who might be properly included under the headings “we” and “they,” the sole legitimate query that might have been posed on 9-1-1 was—and remains—“How could ‘they’ possibly *not* hate ‘us’?” From there, honest interrogators might have gone on to frame two others: “Why did it take ‘them’ so long to arrive?” and “Why, under the circumstances, did they conduct themselves with such obvious and admirable restraint?”

#### **On Matters of Balance, Proportion and “Security”**

There can be no defensible suggestion that those who attacked the Pentagon and WTC on 9-1-1 were seeking to “get even” with the U.S. Still less is there a basis for claims that they “started” something, or that U.S. has anything at all to get even with them for. Quite the contrary. For the attackers to have arguably “evened the score” for Iraq’s dead children alone, it would have been necessary for them to have killed *a hundred times* the number of Americans who actually died. This in itself, however, would have allowed them to attain parity in terms of real numbers. The U.S. population is about fifteen times the size of Iraq’s. Hence, for the attackers to have achieved a proportionally equivalent impact, it would have been necessary that they kill some 7.5 *million* Americans.

Even this does not apprehend the reality at issue. For a genuine parity of proportional impact to obtain, it would have been necessary for the attackers to have killed 7.5 million American *children*. To inflict an overall parity of suffering for what has been done to Iraq since 1990—taking into account the million-odd dead Iraqi adults—they would have had to kill roughly 22.5 million Americans. The instrumentality by which such carnage would have been dispensed would presumably have been not just the three “300,000 pound cruise missiles” employed on September 11, but also the other 49,997 airborne explosives necessary for the attackers to break even in terms of the number of bombs and missiles the U.S. expended on Iraq’s cities *after* their air defense systems had been completely “suppressed.”

The targets, moreover, would not have been restricted to such obvious elements of what America’s general staff habitually refer to as “command and control infrastructure” as the Pentagon and the WTC. Rather the attackers of 9-1-1 would have followed



the well-established U.S. pattern of “surgically” obliterating sewage, water sanitation and electrical generation plants, food production/storage capacity, hospitals, pharmaceutical production facilities, communications centers and much more upon which Americans are no less dependent than Iraqis for survival. The result, aside from mass death, would be a surviving population wracked by malnutrition and endemic disease (just as in Iraq today).

Framed in these terms, it is immediately obvious that, were the U.S. somehow forced to compensate proportionally and in lives for the damage it has so consistently wrought upon other peoples over the past two centuries, it would run out of people long before it ran out of compensatory obligation. Indeed, applying such standards of “pay back” vis-à-vis American Indians alone would require a lethal reduction in the U.S. population, using biological agents and comparable means, of between 96 and 99 percent. Hence, no one other than the most extravagant of America’s many network propagandists has claimed that the attacks upon the Pentagon and WTC were carried out as part of an effort to extract anything remotely resembling a genuine equivalency in suffering.

It follows that 9-1-1 was a mostly symbolic act, a desperate bid to command attention on the part of those so utterly dehumanized and devalued in the minds of average Americans that the very fact of their existence has never been deemed worthy of a moment’s contemplation. On the basis of the September 11 “wake up call”—and perhaps *only* on this basis—could they position themselves to “send a message” standing the least chance of being heard by the U.S. body politic. Whether it might be understood is an altogether different matter, given the media’s predictable, craven and across-the-board compliance with official demands that the attackers’ carefully-articulated explanations of their actions *not* be placed before the public.

Still, at one level, the message delivered was uncensorably straightforward and simple, assuming the form of a blunt question: “How does it feel?” The query was and remains on its face one well worth posing. Not since its own Civil War ended in 1865, after all, has the U.S. been directly subject to a serious taste of what it so lavishly and routinely dishes out to others (no, Pearl Harbor doesn’t count; it is located in Polynesia, not North America). Small wonder that, for most Americans, including even a decided majority of the troops who’ve served in “combat” since Vietnam, the grisly panoramas of war, mass murder and genocide have become sanitized to the point of sterility, imbued with no more concrete reality than any other “home entertainment” offering.

How else to explain the popularity of increasingly technicalized military jargon like “kill ratios,” “force degradation” and “collateral damage” among the general public? How else to understand the public’s willingness to accept the absurd proposition that a teenager safely ensconced at a computer console while launching missiles meant to slaughter unseen/unknown others at a thousand miles distance somehow or another qualifies as a “hero”? Americans have in effect collectively lost their grip, and with it all sense of the charnal stench wafting from the policies, procedures and priorities they’ve consistently endorsed. The attacks of 9-1-1, while certainly designed to inflict the maximum material damage possible, given their very limited scope, were even more clearly intended to force U.S. citizens into some semblance of reacquaintance with the kind of excruciation their

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country—and thus they themselves—have become far too accustomed to dispensing with impunity.

This brings a second level of the attackers’ message into focus. If it could be anticipated that Americans would find it exceedingly painful to undergo a heavy bombing of even the most token sort—as surely they would—it could also be expected that they would begin casting about with considerable urgency for a way of ensuring that such “terrorism” would not be repeated. This, in turn, suggested that U.S. citizens might at last be receptive to embarking upon the only route to attainment of this worthy objective, a trajectory marked by Noam Chomsky’s formulation, advanced shortly after the attacks, that “if you really want to put an end terrorism, you have to begin by no longer participating in it.” Or, more sharply, “stop killing their babies,” as the matter was framed by Georgia State law professor Natsu Saito a short while later.

At base, what the attackers communicated was the proposition that, from now on, if Americans wish their own children to be happy and safe, they going to have to allow the children of other peoples an equivalent safety and chance for happiness. In effect, Americans will have to accord a respect for the rights of others equal to that which they demand for themselves, valuing “Other” youngsters as much as they do their own. Finally, and emphatically, the U.S. is going to have to abide by the rules of civilized behavior articulated in international law (its own citizens shouldering the responsibility of seeing to it that this is so). The character of a society rejecting such eminently reasonable terms as being “unfair” should be to a large extent self-revealing.

Unfortunately, this is precisely what the preponderance of Americans have done. Refusing the prospect that the collectivity of their own attitudes and behavior made something like 9-1-1 inevitable, they have instead bleated their “innocence” for all to hear, meanwhile reacting like a figurative Jeffrey Dahmer, enraged because the latest of his many hapless victims has displayed the effrontery of slapping his face. Witness, if you will, the frenzied demands accruing from every major media outlet that those suspected of involvement in the 9-1-1 attacks—or of supporting the attackers in some fashion—be subjected to “complete extermination.” Witness as well the winks and chuckles with which commentators from “right” and “left” alike greeted photographic evidence that American surrogates in Afghanistan have been gleefully castrating and otherwise mutilating captured enemy soldiers before summarily executing them.

Once again—this time in the name of a “crusade” to “rid the world of evil”—Americans have enthusiastically embraced a policy devolving upon the systematic and potentially massive perpetra-



tion of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Here, a sublime irony presents itself: Since by no morally-coherent standard—moral assessment being necessary since the term employed is exclusive to the vernacular of theology/morality—can the policy at issue be construed as anything *but* “evil,” claims that it has been implemented for the above-stated purpose amount to little other than announcements of suicidal intent. Still more ironic is the fact that the situation in many ways requires a more literal than metaphorical interpretation.

“Out there,” amidst the seething, bleeding psychic wastelands spawned by the unspeakable arrogance of U.S. imperial pretension, someone is quietly awaiting the definitive answers to questions of whether and to what extent Americans might respond constructively to the warnings posted on the WTC and Pentagon. A grim smile upon his face, her finger upon the trigger, s/he is almost certainly mouthing words to the effect of, “Go ahead, punk. Make my day.” What will it be next time? A far larger and more destructive wave of suicide bombings? Dispersal of biological or chemical agents? Detonation of one or more portable nuclear devices? All of these? The object, no doubt, will be to attain something much closer to bona fide payback for what the U.S. has done, and is doing even now.

The straw-like “option” at which the great majority of Americans are presently grasping in a transparent attempt to restore their sense of exemption from responsibility—the notion that a combination of military force, intelligence gathering and “tightened domestic security” can ultimately immunize them from the consequences of their country’s actions (or their own inactions)—is purely delusional. Short of setting out to kill every man, woman and child in the Third World, little can be expected of the military in terms of preventing “terrorist” responses to its own crimes. Suggestions that the CIA can somehow alter the situation, rendering applications of military force “surgically” effective against “the terrorist infrastructure” are laughable, as should be evident from the abysmal failure of the agency’s Phoenix program, undertaken for precisely the same purpose in Vietnam.

Claims that measures like those described in the recent “Homelands Security Act” will produce the desired prophylactic effect are the most vacuous of all. The “internal security model” most often cited by “experts” for emulation by the U.S. is that of Israel, a country which, although it has converted itself into a veritable garrison state over the past thirty years, has been spectacularly *unable* to prevent determined attackers from striking almost at will. All that can be expected of such “defense” initiatives is repression of what little actual political liberty had been left to residents of “the land of the free” by the dawn of the new millennium.

### The “Miracle of Immaculate Genocide”

In the final analysis, it is quite reasonable that fulfillment of America’s now fervent quest for security be made contingent upon its willingness to commence a process of profound national introspection that, alone, will enable it to fundamentally rework its relationship(s) with those upon whom it has heretofore proven so cavalier in visiting the worst sorts of oppression. There is much militating against attainment of so positive a development, however, not least the fact that, in the U.S., a pathology often associated with clinical disorder has mutated long since into what can best be described as a normative social condition. “There are,” as Susan Griffin has observed, “whole disciplines, institu-

tions, rubrics in [American] culture which serve as categories of denial.”

The mentality involved is in some respects multifaceted and complex, but always self-serving and convenient, each facet serving mainly to augment or complete its ostensible antithesis, producing a whole remarkable for nothing so much as the virulence of its intractability. Writing of the holocaust perpetrated by U.S. troops in the Philippines a century ago—an onslaught entailing orders that every male Filipino over the age of ten be slaughtered, and the resulting deaths of one in every six inhabitants on the island of Luzon—historian Stuart Creighton Miller describes “the tendency of highly patriotic Americans...to [vociferously] deny such abuses and even to assert that they could never exist in their country.” The pattern is unmistakably similar to that exhibited by severe alcoholics who, despite all evidence of the damage their behavior has caused, chronically insist that “the opposite of everything is true.”

More subtle than the characteristic refusal of “conservatives” to allow mere facts to in any way alter their core presumptions was/is the complementary nature of the “alternative” interpretation(s) most often posed by their “progressive” opponents. Noting that the Philippines genocide was a matter of public knowledge by 1901, Creighton Miller goes on to observe that collective “amnesia over the horrors of the war of conquest...set in early, during the summer of 1902.” He then concludes by reflecting upon how “anti-imperialists aided the process by insisting that the conflict and its attendant atrocities had been the result of a conspiracy by a handful of leaders who carried out, through deceit and subterfuge, the policy and means of expansion overseas against the will of the majority of their countrymen.”

By refusing to acknowledge that most Americans had been bitten by the same bug that afflicted Roosevelt, Lodge, and Beveridge, anti-imperialists were letting the people off the hook and in their own way preserving the American sense of innocence. Unfortunately, the man in the street shared the dreams of world-power status, martial glory, and future wealth that would follow expansion. When the dream soured, the American people neither reacted with very much indignation, nor did they seem to retreat to their cherished political principles. If anything, they seemed to take their cues from their leader in the White House by first putting out of mind all the sordid episodes in the conquest, and then forgetting the entire war itself.

So it was then, the more so today. Contemporary conservatives, whenever they can be momentarily boxed into conceding one or another unsavory aspect of America’s historical record, are forever insisting that whatever they’ve admitted can be “properly” understood only when viewed as an “exception to the rule,” an “aberration,” “atypical” to the point of “anomalousness.” None have shown a readiness to address the question of exactly how many such “anomalies” might be required before they can be said to comprise “the rule” itself. When pressed, conservatives invariably retreat into a level of diversionary polemic excusable at best on elementary school playgrounds, arguing that anything “we” have done is somehow excused by allegations that “they” have done things just as bad.



Progressives, on the other hand, while acknowledging many of America's more reprehensible features, have become far more refined in offering hook-free analyses than they were in 1902. No longer much preoccupied with such crudities as "conspiracy theory," they have become quite monolithic in attributing all things negative to handy abstractions like "capitalism," "the state," "structural oppression," and, yes, "the hierarchy." Hence, they have been able to conjure what might be termed the "miracle of immaculate genocide," a form of genocide, that is, in which—apart from a few amorphous "decision-making élites"—there are no actual perpetrators and no one who might "really" be deemed culpable by reason of complicity. The parallels between this "cutting edge" conception and the defense mounted by postwar Germans—including the nazis at Nuremberg—are as eerie as they are obvious.

The implications of this were set forth in stark relief during the aftermath of 9-1-1, when it was first suggested that a decided majority of those killed in the WTC attack might be more accurately viewed as "little Eichmanns"—that is, as a cadre of faceless bureaucrats and technical experts who had willingly (and profitably) harnessed themselves to the task making America's genocidal world order hum with maximal efficiency—than as "innocents." The storm of outraged exception taken by self-proclaimed progressives to this simple observation has been instructive, to say the least. The objections have been mostly transparent in their diversionary intent, seeking as they have to focus attention exclusively on janitors, firemen and food service workers *rather than* the much larger number of corporate managers, stock brokers, bond traders, finance and systems analysts, etc., among those killed.

A few have complained of the "cold-bloodedness" and "insensitivity" embodied, not in the vocations pursued by the latter group, but in describing their attitudes/conduct as having been in any way analogous to Eichmann's. Left unstated, however, is the more accurate term we should employ in characterizing a representative 30-year-old foreign exchange trader who, in full knowledge that every cent of his lavish commissions derived from the starving flesh of defenseless Others, literally wallowed in self-indulgent excess, playing the big shot, priding himself on being "a sharp dresser" and the fact that "money spilled from his pockets... flowed like crazy... [spent] on the black BMW and those clothes—forgetting to pack ski clothes for a Lake Tahoe trip, dropping \$1,000 on new stuff," and so on. As a "cool guy" with a "warm heart"? A "good family man"? Just an "ordinary," "average" or "normal" fellow who "happened to strike it rich"? How then are we to describe Eichmann himself?

Clearly, either the devastating insights concerning "the banality of evil" offered by Hannah Arendt in her 1963 study, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, have yet to penetrate the consciousness of many American progressives, or American progressives are in the main every bit as mired in the depths of denial as the most hidebound of their conservative counterparts. Irrespective of whether there is an appreciable segment of the U.S. population prepared to look the matter in the face, however, the same condition of willful blindness cannot be said to prevail throughout much of the rest of the world.

Excusing one's self for one's crimes is never a legitimate prerogative, nor are attempts to hide or explain them away. This is all the more true while the crimes are being repeated. Neither justice, forgiveness nor exegesis can be self-administered or bestowed.

Of this, there should be no doubt in a country where the principle of "victims' rights" has lately been enshrined as an article of juridical faith. Those who comprised the "chickens" of 9-1-1 will have their say, and it will ultimately be definitive. In this connection, the only real question confronting the U.S. polity is how in the future it will be necessary for them to say it. And that, rightly enough, will be entirely contingent upon the extent and decisiveness with which Americans prove capable of factoring such voices into the calculus of their personal and national self-concepts.

### In the Alternative

In 1945, addressing a strikingly similar context of national criminality and denial—albeit one in which the state and its collaborating corporate institutions had been pounded into physical submission by external forces—the philosopher Karl Jaspers set forth a schematic of culpability, acceptance of which he suggested might allow both Germans and Germany to redeem themselves. Internalizing Jaspers' four-part formulation stands to yield comparable results in America, for Americans, and thus for everyone else as well. It is therefore well worth summarizing here (in a somewhat revised form reflecting enunciation of the Nuremberg Doctrine and other subsequent developments).

- First, there is the matter of *criminal guilt*. States, corporations and other such entities, while they may be criminally-conceived, and employed for criminal purposes, do not themselves commit crimes. Crimes—that is, violations of customary or black letter law—are committed by individuals, those who conceive, employ or serve state and corporate institutions. Those alleged to have committed specific offenses are subject to personal prosecution and punishment. If the transgressions of which they stand accused are of a sort sanctioned either explicitly or implicitly by the state under which authority they've acted, their prosecution cannot as a rule occur before tribunals controlled by that same state. Nor, if mere vengeance is to be avoided, can such tribunals be placed as a rule under control of the immediate victims. Where crimes of state and/or state-sanctioned crime are at issue, the only appropriate judicial forum is an impartially-composed international court.
- Second, there is the matter of *political guilt*. It is the collective responsibility of the citizens in a modern state to ensure by *all* means necessary that its government adheres to the rule of law, not just domestically but internationally. There are no bystanders. No one is entitled to an "apolitical" exemption from such obligation. Where default occurs, either by citizen endorsement of official criminality or by the failure of citizens to *effectively* oppose it, liability is incurred by all. Although degrees of onus may be assigned along a continuum traversing the distance from those who most actively embraced the crime to those who most actively opposed it, *none* are "innocent." The victims thus hold an unequivocal right to receive reparation, compensation and, where possible, complete restitution in ways and amounts deemed equitable and fair, not in the estimation of those



liable, but in the judgment of an impartial international court.

- Third, there is the matter of *moral guilt*. While it may prove impractical in settings where crimes of state are at issue to try all who have committed offenses (whether by way of perpetration, or by complicity), those who go unprosecuted are not thereby absolved. To them belongs the public stigma associated with their deeds and consequent existential confrontation with themselves. In this, there can be no recourse to the supposed mitigation embodied in the apology that one has “merely done one’s job” or “just followed orders.” Still less can exoneration be found in prevarications concerning “human nature”; if it were the “nature” of humans to engage in such acts, *everyone* would do so, and, self-evidently, not everyone does. Each individual is thus personally responsible for his/her acts, “including the execution of political and military orders,” and thus socially/morally accountable for them.
- Finally, there is the matter of what Jaspers termed *meta-physical guilt*. This rests most heavily upon those who, while not guilty of any specific offense, averted their eyes, sitting by while crimes against humanity were committed in their name. It encompasses as well all who, while we may have registered opposition in some form or degree, did less than we might have—failing thereby to risk our lives unconditionally—in our struggle to prevent or halt such crimes. Therein, incontestably, lies the guilt shared by all who opt to remain alive while Others are systematically subjugated, dispossessed, tortured and murdered.

Those who would reject such criteria out-of-hand might do well to bear in mind that they join company thus with Carl Schmitt, a leading light among the nazi legal philosophers, who was among the first to pronounce them “beneath attention.” Others, seeking to neutralize the implications by equivocation, insisting that while a Jasperian schema “makes sense for Germans,” the “good offsets the bad” where America and Americans are concerned, should be aware that this is precisely the argument offered by Germany’s “New Right”—neonazis, by any other name—with regard to the Third Reich itself. If it can be agreed that the *Hitlerstaat* remains impervious to rehabilitation, regardless of its well-documented instigation of expressways and Volkswagens, the same holds true for the U.S., irrespective of the supposed triumphs of “American civilization.”

Such issues must be faced straightforwardly, without dissembling, if Americans are ever to hold rightful title to the “good conscience” they’ve so long laid claim to owning. How they are to respond to what stares back at them from the proverbial mirror is an altogether different question, however. Transformation from beastliness to beauty can be neither instantaneous nor, in terms of its retroactive undoing, complete. There is no painless, privilege-preserving pill that can be taken to effect a quick fix of what ails the U.S., no petition, no manifesto, no song or candle-lit vigil that will suffice. The terms of change must and will be harsh, inevitably so, given the propensity of those who seek to prevent it to gauge their success by the rotting corpses of toddlers. This

truth, no matter its inconvenience to those snugly situated within the comfort zones of political pretense, is all that defines the substance of meaningful struggle.

It cannot happen all at once, but it must begin somewhere, and for this there is need of nothing so much as a focal point. That, and external assistance, given Americans’ abject inexperience in undertaking projects entailing the least hint of humility. Fortunately, an “action-agenda” combining both elements readily presents itself. Americans must demonstrate, conclusively and concretely, that they have at last attained a sufficient degree of self-awareness to subordinate themselves both individually and *as a country* to the rule of law. Such an initiative, *only* such, and then only if it is pressed by every available means, is likely to reassure those who came on 9-1-1 that the seeds of Jaspers’ wisdom have at last taken root in the U.S. to an extent making future such attacks unnecessary.

All who fancy themselves progressive—in common with every conservative who has ever mouthed the lofty rhetoric of “law enforcement”—can start by inaugurating a concerted drive to compel their government to reverse its 1986 repudiation of the compulsory jurisdiction previously held over U.S. foreign policy by the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Concomitantly, Americans can set about such action as is necessary to ensure that their country joins the rest of the world in placing itself under the jurisdiction of the newly-established International Criminal Court (ICC). Massive international support and assistance is virtually guaranteed to accrue to any such U.S. citizen initiative.

Following a parallel track, although much of it falls within the domain of *jus cogens* (“customary law”) and are thus enforceable against the U.S. without its agreement, an important gesture would be embodied in Americans taking such action as is necessary to compel their government to ratify those elements of international public and humanitarian law it has, often alone, heretofore refused to endorse. High on this lengthy list, is the 1948 Convention on Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, to which the U.S. presently claims a “sovereign right” to self-exemption from compliance. Recent additions include the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the International Treaty Banning the Use, Production, Stockpiling and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines (1998).

Most important of all—given the abysmal record of the U.S. when it comes to bringing even those *acknowledged* to have perpetrated war crimes and crimes against humanity before its domestic bar of justice, given the fact that only the most token punishments have ever been visited upon those few who have for cosmetic reasons been domestically tried and convicted of such offenses, and given the imperative of establishing that Americans are finally serious about adhering to the law—such action as is necessary must be taken to compel delivery of an initial selection of present/former U.S. officials for prosecution by the ICC.

Here, although the list of imminently eligible candidates is all but overwhelming, a mere threesome might constitute an adequate preliminary sample. The first, on the basis of her earlier-noted statement concerning the fate of Iraq’s children and administration of attendant policies, should be former Secretary of State Albright. Second, for reasons explained quite well by Christopher Hitchens and others, should be former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. The third should be current North Carolina Senator Jesse Helms, the bellicosity of whose threats to visit “dire conse-



quences" upon the world community "in the event a single American is ever indicted" for violating the laws of war and/or international humanitarian law exemplifies the manner in which the U.S. has for decades thwarted implementation of procedures for the peaceful resolution of international disputes (this in itself offers prima facie evidence of Helms' complicity in the more direct crimes perpetrated by his codefendants).

Prosecution of these three major U.S. criminals before the ICC would pave the way for a series of such trials, targeting as in the Nuremberg proceedings representative defendants drawn from each of the interactive "classes" of American offenders—governmental, military, corporate, scientific and so on—comprising the elite decisionmaking stratum of America's New World Order. Collaterally, the criminal trials would in themselves lay a superb evidentiary groundwork for consideration of international tort claims by the ICJ, in many cases the sole procedure through which issues concerning indemnification of America's proliferate victims are likely ever to be satisfactorily addressed. It may also be anticipated that, under these conditions, the principles realized in international fora will be absorbed by the U.S. judiciary, as they were in postwar Germany, to an extent sufficient for bona fide prosecutions of America's war criminals and other such terrorists to at last commence in domestic courts.

Against this backdrop, otherwise preposterous assertions that recourse to "the World Court is the way to proceed" in halting America's persistently murderous aggression take on a certain coherence. The question begged in such formulations, as they stand, and as they've stood all along, concerns enforcement. A court is not a police force. Less, is it an army. Neither its jurisdiction nor its judgments are self-executing. Its decrees are vacuous without a means of exacting compliance. Should it turn out that Americans were prodded by the pain inflicted on 9-1-1 to finally begin shouldering the responsibility of forcing their government to obey the law—with *all* that this implies—it may be said that a world historic corner was turned on that date. Should this not prove to be the case, however, others, especially those Others most egregiously victimized by American lawlessness, will have no real alternative but to try and do the job themselves. And, in the collectivity of their civic default, Americans, no more than the Good Germans of 1945, can have little legitimate complaint as to how they may have to go about it.

### To See Things Clearly

If the prescription sketched out in the preceding section offers the prospect of improving the level of security enjoyed by all Americans—mainly by drastically reducing the need for it—it contains a range of other benefits as well. Salient among them is what, with respect to Germany, Harvard political scientist Daniel Jonah Goldhagen has described as an "internationalization of the 'national' history." By this, he meant a process through which the country's apprehension of its past has been subjected to such intensive and sustained scrutiny/contributions by others that the "collective, narcissistic self-exaltation" typically marking such narratives has been preempted. This, Goldhagen concludes, has

enabled contemporary Germans to attain a far more accurate—and thus healthier—conception of themselves than they were likely ever to have achieved on their own.

It is exactly this kind of aggregate self-understanding that Jaspers posited as being essential to a process through which the varieties of guilt he'd so carefully delineated could be transformed into their antithesis, creating what he hoped might constitute an insurmountable psychointellectual barrier against any wholesale resurgence of the mentality from which Germany's communality of guilt had emerged. There is no reason to assume that the idea holds less utility for Americans today than it did for Germans then, or that the rewards for the world of America's figurative denazification would be any less substantial than those manifest in the more literal German process.

A wealth of information necessary to redefining the character of the "American experiment" can be expected to take center stage in the above-described judicial proceedings, whether international or domestic, criminal or civil. Much of it will prove to have been available all along, publicly displayed but usually distorted beyond recognition, its meaning neatly buried in the texts,

rendered alternately in terms of triumphalism or apology, that from the first have comprised America's historical canon and its popular counterpart(s). Reinterpreted through the lens of law, detailed at trial by those charged with assessing the culpability of individual defendants and/or the degree of responsibility inhering in the polity that empowered them, even that which was "known" will stand exposed in the glare of an entirely different light.

Such developments represent a good start, but by no means an end point or culmination. Even the most honest and penetrating of prosecutorial presentations is by nature erratic and uneven, skewed by the parameters of its purpose to focus in fragmentary fashion upon certain usually topical matters, emphasizing, deemphasizing or ignoring issues of wider historical concern without regard to historiographical requirements. The record made during the course of any trial, and the conclusions formally drawn from it, must therefore be compared to/combined with those obtained in related proceedings to create a composite. This overarching iteration of what has been "discovered" through adjudication must then be broken down again in various ways, sifted and refined, its implications adduced and contextualized (that is, reinterpreted by way of their connection with/dissimilarity from "broader"—i.e., historically deeper and more diverse—processes or sequences of events).

Plainly, it will be forever premature to proclaim the consummation of such a project before the most thoroughgoing reconstruction of American history, and thus a complete resignification of the codes of meaning and value residing within it, has been achieved. With this in mind, the problem confronting those who would accept it is how best to approach so monumental a devoir. A method is needed by which to deal with the surfeit of data at hand, arranging it in ways which lend coherence to its otherwise nebulous mass, tracing not just its outer contours but the inner trajectories that gave them shape, coaxing it to divulge truths too long denied.





Photo and Artist: Logan Hicks



# STENCIL PIRATES



Artist: Borf Photo: Josh MacPhee

*In "Stencil Pirates" Josh MacPhee provides a comprehensive look at the history of street art stencils and how they fit into the larger pantheon of street art and political expression. This essay and the accompanying photos are excerpted from the book **"Stencil Pirates: A Global Study of the Street Stencil"** published by Soft Skull Press.*

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By Josh MacPhee

Stencils are the cheapest and easiest way to print an image over and over again on paper, a sidewalk, a dumpster, practically anywhere. Artist Anton van Dalen calls them "a portable printing press." Unlike silkscreen and other printmaking techniques, stenciling is simple and inexpensive. All you need is a piece of cardstock, an exacto knife, and a can of spray paint. In a single night, a stenciler can print hundreds of images with nothing more than these simple tools.

Street stencils exist somewhere between official street signage and traditional graffiti (tags, throw-ups, pieces). They tend to use simple words and basic images that can be easily read by the general public. These images and/or text are repeatedly printed over and over, and oftentimes replicate official signage, mocking city markings on lampposts and electrical switch boxes. At the same time, stencils are graffiti; they are illegal and alter public and private property. They are an artist's ideas and stories projected onto the city. Whether it is a radical political message, an arresting graphic, or simply a stray word painted throughout a neighborhood, stencils claim billboards, walls, and sidewalks as the canvas of artists and/or activists.





Artist: Claude Moller

Photo: Josh MacPhee

### Sparks

The term "stencil" comes from the French *estenceler* meaning to decorate with bright colors, which in turn is derived from the Latin *scintilla*, which means "a spark." Stenciling is one of the oldest forms of printmaking. It was commonly used in Egypt during the time of the pyramids and in China when the Great Wall was built. The Japanese learned the craft from the Chinese and developed it into an extremely precise art form for fabric printing. Indigenous people throughout North and South America used stencils, and decorative stencil designs can be found on Roman, Greek, Etruscan, and Buddhist artifacts that are all thousands of years old. After the Russian Revolution, Ivan Maliutin created at least a dozen political posters in the early 1920s for the Soviet political education department using stencils and guache. At the same time, Vladimir Mayakovsky was producing similar stenciled posters for ROSTA, the Soviet telegraph agency. The bold and simplified texts and images were stenciled as posters and used to bring news to a population that was largely illiterate. There are scattered bits of evidence of stencils showing up throughout ancient and modern history, from stencils of Charlemagne's signature, to European political parties in the 1940s and 50s using stencils to mark their territory. For the duration of this time, the basic printmaking technique has stayed the same. An open design is cut out of a solid, impervious material, that material is held flat against the surface one wishes to paint, then ink or paint is pushed through the design, originally by brushing or dapping, now usually with spray paint.

The full history of stenciling is extremely interesting, but I want to focus on the modern evolution of the street stencil. Tristan Manco's *Stencil Graffiti* does a good job of tracing the history of much of the modern European stencil movement to Parisian artists like Blek le Rat, who began stenciling around 1982. Even earlier than this, there was an explosion of stencil usage in New York, Baltimore, Mexico, Nicaragua, South Africa, England, and

on the Berlin Wall. There is no clean and simple narrative history of how exactly stencils jumped off city-painted street signs and ornately decorated furniture onto walls in the form of rebellious slogans and magical images. Instead there is a complex web of evolution that connects and disconnects along the way.

In Nicaragua, the stencil became popular in the 1970s as part of the campaign by Sandinista revolutionaries against the Somoza dictatorship. The Sandinistas had taken their name from Nicaragua's most recognized anti-colonial hero, Augusto Sandino. Sandino often wore a giant cowboy hat, and the Sandinistas and other anti-Somoza activists started using stylized images of Sandino, or simply his hat, as symbols of resistance. By the time the Sandinistas overthrew Somoza, thousands of images of Sandino had been stenciled all over Nicaragua. These stencils sat on the walls next to revolutionary posters, slogans, and poems painted in freehand by workers and revolutionaries as they learned to read and write. It was the ability of the stencil to be repeated endlessly that gave it extreme power, in this case to represent Nicaraguan resistance. After the initial success of the revolution,

the stencil continued to be used. Repetitive stenciled images of "martyrs" reminded people of what was lost during the struggle and neighborhood political organizations used stencils to clearly mark the areas they operated in.

At the same time, halfway around the world, graffiti was quickly becoming a way for the resistance movement to communicate in South Africa. As censorship of the press increased in the 1970s and 80s, the anti-apartheid movement turned to the walls as a place to communicate the news of the day. Stencils were a large part of this. Particularly in cities, revolutionaries stenciled thousands of messages, the most common being "Free Mandela." Other images included resistance fighters with weapons, calls for "Peoples' Power," and humorous statements attacking then Prime Minister P.W. Botha such as "P.W., the sky is falling on your head." In South Africa under apartheid, a street artist could easily receive two years in jail for a first offense.

Simultaneously in Mexico, the street stencil took on a different form in the hands of the artist collective Group Suma. Suma was formed in 1976 and quickly began using stencils to paint on the streets. The group was part of a movement of radical Mexican art collectives that were trying to leave the art world and gallery system and reach a much wider section of Mexican society. Experimenting with various art forms, Suma found that by repeating stenciled images representing different sections of Mexican society, they could easily create large murals dealing with important social issues. These murals appealed to, and could be understood by, extremely wide and diverse audiences. Life size stencils of anonymous bureaucrats and poor indigenous women were used to expose and confront the relationships between those in power and the hardships of daily life for everyone else. The collective was also interested in making the artistic process open and available to everyone. By creating murals with the basic tool of the stencil, which was familiar and popularly used on street signage and in political campaign signage, they made the creation of the art more accessible to people.



Around this same time, street stenciling was becoming a popular form of expression in Europe. Blek le Rat began stenciling lifesize human figures around Paris in the early 80s, inspiring a whole group of young artists. In 1978 and 1979, the British punk band Crass began stenciling its logo and anti-militarist slogans on record covers, protest banners, and city walls. In 1976, the fourth generation of the Berlin wall was built. Sturdier than earlier versions, it was now a solid concrete wall, water-proofed and painted white. Soon after being completed it became a canvas for artists and activists on the western side, and it wasn't long before stencils began to materialize between all of the other graffiti. The wall was simultaneously a highly politically charged barrier and a 40-mile long gallery for artists' expression. Millions of people came to see the wall during the 1980s and the art and expression on it spread across the globe with stories told and photos taken.

New York City appears to be the place where street stenciling really took off in the U.S. New York City in the 1970s saw an explosion of art on the street. Groups like the Madam Binh Graphics Collective were moving Leftist politics from Communist newspapers and political rallies onto everyday streets by spray painting slogans and pasting up posters. Graffiti writers moved from simple tags in their neighborhoods to spray-painting top to bottom productions on trains that traveled throughout the city. The blending of political street art, graffiti entering into popular consciousness, and formally trained artists being inspired by graffiti to bring their art out of the gallery is what set the stage for street stenciling. Graffiti was exploding in NYC, articles were being written about it in the Village Voice and artists like Keith Haring and Jean-Michel Basquiat were popularizing graffiti in the art world. Early New York stencil artists Anton van Dalen, John Fekner, and Seth Tobocman all cite traditional graffiti as one of the motivations for beginning to stencil on the street. At the same time, big clubs like the Danceteria had artists paint the walls. Since the walls would get trashed during a busy night, artists started stenciling them since the art could then be easily reproduced. Fekner, as well as large numbers of other artists, painted the walls at the Danceteria. In the early 1980s, artists were stenciling on clothes. Kat P. Sent was spray-painting peace and anti-Reagan t-shirts. Seth Tobocman says, "Basically the whole time period was about breaking down barriers. Politics, art, and music were all mixing together. Trained artists were getting into graffiti and politics, activists were starting to mark the streets and be involved in bands, punks were getting into art and politics. Everything was mixing up and it was all happening in the street."

Out of this brew came a large number of artists who experimented with stenciling on the street. David Wojnarowicz started stenciling around the city in 1979, particularly on the outside of galleries and other art world spots in an attempt to shake up their conception of what art was. Eric Drooker, Michael Roman, and James Romberger, three more artists affiliated with World War 3 Illustrated, also tried their hands at stenciling in the late 70s, early 80s. A similar scene began to develop in Baltimore at the same time, with dozens of artists using stencils to communicate with



Artist: & Photo: Rone2

each other in the street. The stencils of many of the Baltimore artists were extremely self-aware of their audience. John Elsberry's "Blind Man's Bluff" was a stencil of the title in Braille letters, which is of course unreadable to both the audience who can see it and the audience that would normally read Braille. Ruth Turner's "Foxtrot" series were colorful feet stenciled onto the sidewalk in dance diagrams, almost demanding a passerby to try out the dance.

Two of the earliest artists that really explored the boundaries of the stencil medium and attempted to maximize what they could do with it were John Fekner and Anton van Dalen. I will talk more about them because they are good examples of how artists transitioned to stenciling on the street.

Van Dalen was born in Holland in the 1930s when stenciling was still a respected craft art. Growing up, stenciling was part of the culture around him, something he knew about, but it wasn't part of his art practice. He moved to New York in the 1960s, and his Lower East Side neighborhood became the subject matter for most of his drawings and other art. In the late 70s he began feeling like his art was too separated from its subject matter. In 1980 he began to transform some of the images about the neighborhood into stencils and painted them on the street. This was a way to give the work back to the neighborhood and create a direct feedback loop. The content of the work was the street, so what better place for its context than the street? Van Dalen doesn't recall knowing anyone else at the time stenciling in the Lower East Side, but he cites traditional graffiti and the Mudd Club as early influences to moving his art to the street. The Mudd Club, a hot spot and gathering place for young hipsters and up and coming artists like Basquiat and Blondie, would do very basic text stencils around the neighborhood to announce upcoming shows. Although van Dalen was meticulous in the design and execution of his stencils, he's said that he did not see this early stenciling as part of his art practice and instead thought of it as ephemeral and



as such didn't document it. The act of painting on the street and the neighborhood's reaction were far more important than the specific stencil print itself.

John Fekner came to stenciling through a conceptual art background. Although he has flirted with high profile gallery shows and representation, he has consistently been committed to creating work that reaches a broader and more diverse audience. In 1976, he began stenciling random dates on sites around Queens. He was using store bought ready-made letters and numbers. Fekner cites Richard Artschwager's "blps" as a main inspiration. These "blps" were stenciled punctuation points, sort of like odd shaped commas that Artschwager would paint throughout the city. Fekner began working with words and leaving short descriptive statements in non-art places, primarily industrial zones. He would paint the word "decay" on a crumbling factory or "industrial fossil" on an abandoned and rusting delivery truck. He saw his audience as the public at large, and primarily industrial workers who worked in the sites he painted. He moved from small phrases to stenciling statements on highway onramps and high up on buildings. Out of necessity these stencils became larger and larger and he began cutting the giant letters out of abandoned refrigerator boxes and other found cardboard. Fekner's stencils drew attention to what was painfully obvious yet seemingly ignored: the collapse and abandonment of poor and industrial areas of New York City, particularly his home, Queens. Art historian Lucy Lippard has called Fekner "a caption writer to the urban environment, adman for the opposition."

From this complex net of beginnings twenty to thirty years ago, stenciling has become a hugely popular global art form. Each early strain has influenced the art in its own way. The ideas and aesthetics within the decorative, political, conceptual, and graffiti-based origin points are all still present today.

### Street Styles

As you read this, somewhere across the globe someone is painting a stencil on the street. Some of these painters are artists, some are activists, some are simply doing their job, marking dumpsters or plywood sheets. For the sake of organizing this

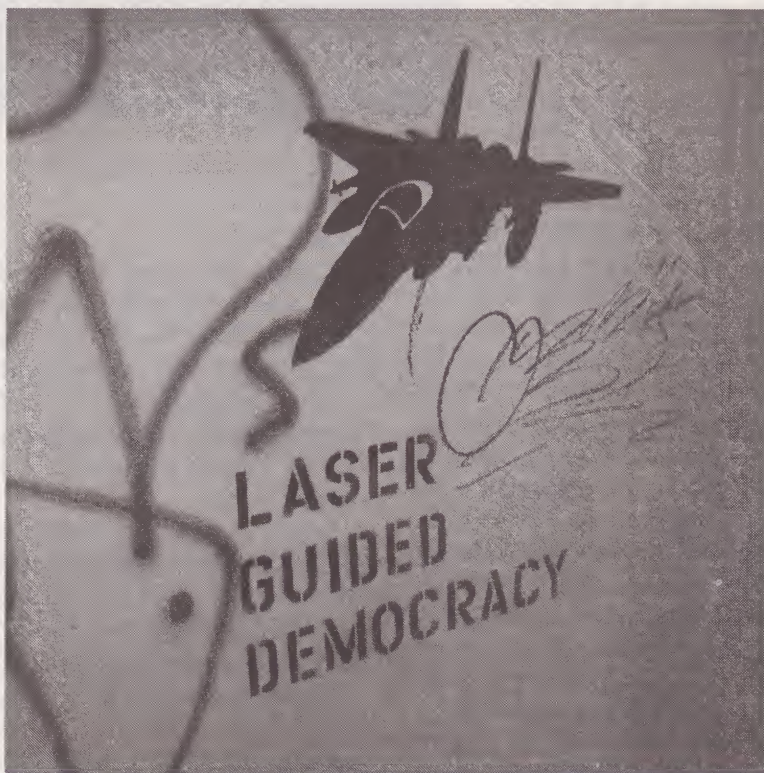
book, I've broken modern street stenciling into different types, or styles. A sharp eye should be able to find these four main types: (1) utilitarian (industrial/decorative), (2) anonymous, often cryptic, message or image, (3) political, and (4) the traditional graffiti usage of ego markings. These types are in no way mutually exclusive. They definitely overlap, but these categories are useful when trying to look at how stencils operate in public space.

### It's Official

The reasons stencils are used for industrial and decorative purposes are largely the same reasons artists use them. They create a clean, crisp image, are infinitely reproducible in a uniform manner, and can be painted onto just about anything. A thou-

sand trashcans can be easily marked with the exact same logo and a thousand kitchen chairs can be painted with the same country duck motif. In many countries, street signs and traffic markings are stenciled. These industrial stencils boil down the intended meaning of any marking into the most basic graphic and textual elements. Although I'm much less interested in this kind of stenciling than the other types, there are actually a large number of examples of impressive industrial stencils. This directness of industrial stenciling has definitely influenced artists. According to Anton van Dalen, he wanted his stencils "to operate like traffic signs, you absorb the meaning before you even know it." Often, artists can use this directness as a start-

ing point for mocking authority, generating satire, or just creating mischief by altering official signage. One of the most common official stencils is "Post No Bills," which is completely ubiquitous in many major cities. Artists have lampooned this simple statement over and over, changing it to "Post Mo Bills" or "Pray for Pills." Skateboarders have also been changing official city anti-skateboard signage for years with stencils, or simply creating their own official looking stencils that encourage skateboarding. British stencil artist Banksy used the signifiers of the official stencil to create a logo for a fake streets and sanitation agency that designated walls as "Official Graffiti Areas." In Chicago, the art event/group The Department of Space and Land Reclamation stenciled dozens of official looking logos around the city. These were to advertise for a specific event, but also to announce the pres-



Artist: unknown

Photo: Josh MacPhee



ence of this new “city department.” Their “official” look has camouflaged the stencils, and years later some still remain, and this is in a city that removes most graffiti within 24–48 hours.

## Typography

The main element in most industrial stencils is typography. Letterforms are both extremely important and extremely undervalued in stenciling. Stencil type is an historic art form and has its own origins and history. I split modern stenciling type into two main categories: “tech styles,” named for the use of technology in their creation, and “hand styles,” letter forms drawn and cut by hand. Tech styles have their root in the standardized and mass-produced stencil letters found at hardware and craft stores. Available in a limited variety of sizes and styles, they made it easy for artists to create basic statements or mimic official public or private signage, which had often been made with the same prefab letters. The entrance in the late 1980s and early 90s of home computers with stencil fonts like “AG Book Stencil” and “Housebroken” allowed artists to create official looking type even easier. Now artists are using an ever expanding font catalog to turn just about any type style into stencil lettering. The website [www.stencilrevolution.com](http://www.stencilrevolution.com) even has twenty stencil fonts you can download for free. Hand styles are interesting because, like a signature, every artist’s style is different. Some artists choose to fill in their A’s and O’s, others develop intricate systems of bridges to hold the letters together.

## Stencil Poetics

At their best and most cryptic, stencils are signs that are both hollow yet simultaneously pregnant with meaning. They are signs without signifiers, images or statements with no clear or fixed meaning. Why is that weird dog on a skateboard painted on the sidewalk? What does it mean? Unlike corporate branding, the images in these open-ended art stencils don’t correlate to any specific or defined concept, object, or meaning in the real world. They are not selling anything, teaching you something specific,

or telling you to do anything or go anywhere. They have no specific agenda. Sometimes there is a message, but it is open-ended to personal interpretation, such as “You Are Connected” or “Don’t Be Afraid” (both phrases painted all over San Francisco in the last couple of years). Stenciled poetry liberates creative writing from the confines of the written page and places it into the line of sight of millions of pedestrians. The imagery or text in an art stencil might have intense or specific meaning to the artist, but there is no way for the audience to know this. The

person stumbling across a stenciled image of a sea shell or strange monster face can only bring to that image what they think it might mean, or what the image conjures up from their experience and memory.

In addition, a person who sees a rooster stenciled on the sidewalk might also see it on a wall ten feet down the street, or on the train on the way to work, or on the window of an abandoned building all the way across town on their way home. What could this rooster be about? What could it be telling me? Why does it keep popping up in my life? As Russell Howze says, “Traditional art is usually a static experience. One cannot find the same sculpture throughout a city or somewhere else in the world unless it is a replica. Most traditional art is found in galleries, chosen by someone and viewed by a select group of people. These pieces of art can be moved, but usually get placed in other galleries with their own limited viewership. Even when thousands of people see larger ex-



Artist: unknown

Photo: Psalm

hibits, traditional art’s exposure is still limited by the price of admission at the door.”

Although they carry no specific meaning, these stencils have the potential to be extremely powerful because they are completely open to the viewer’s interpretation. In a world run by the capitalist need for everything to have a fixed meaning within the market economy, the open sign of the stencil can be disorienting, confusing, or even liberatory. I say liberatory because the public is never encouraged to think critically, but instead simply absorb pre-defined meanings. On one level, encouraging people to think off the conveyor belt of work, shop, eat, sleep, work, shop, eat is downright revolutionary.



## REVIEWS

### Alternative Press Magazines

# Alternative Press Magazines & Zines

*Because there is such a huge volume of alternative material being published, in any single issue we are only able to review a portion of the periodicals we receive. Zines and magazines go in and out of publication daily, so don't be surprised if a few of those listed here have already folded. You're almost always better off sending cash or stamps (or IRCs—International Postal Reply Coupons) for smaller zines, unless the review specifies otherwise. If you want to be sure whether a zine or magazine is still available, send a SASE with a request for current information first.*

*APR will send a free exchange copy to every publication reviewed in these pages (as long as it is at least 16 pages in length in standard 8½ x 11 size or 32 pages in smaller format). Please be aware that we receive hundreds of periodicals, more than we could ever review, and are constantly backlogged. Also keep in mind that the APR issue we send for exchanges will be the one a publication is reviewed in (when it is reviewed), so please be patient. APR does not exchange with non-English language publications. All reviews in this issue are by Jason McQuinn [JM], Thomas Wheeler [TW].*

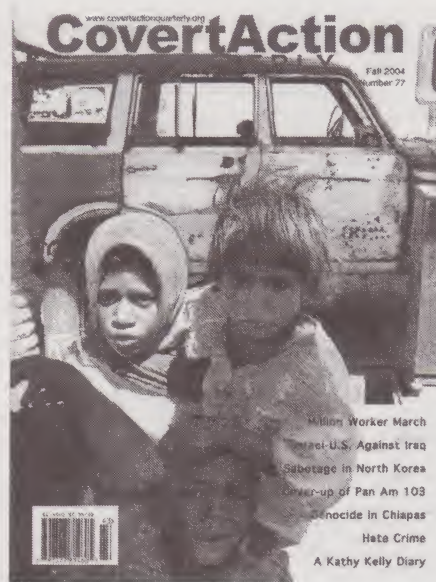
325

unnumbered/August 2004 (e-mail: 325collective@hushmail.com) is a thick, unpaginated anarchist zine full of articles on insurrectionary activities, prisoner news and prisoner support, along with surveillance and prison technologies put together as a "collaboration of a range of people across Europe coming together in the hope of opposing the Bosses, and radically living our dreams of a better future, and not waiting for it, and never giving up." Articles cover Marco Camenisch,

Mark Barnsley, Action Directe prisoners, the Marini trial, etc. Worth checking out! No price listed. [JM]

#### A NEWS

**Information Bulletin from Greece** unnumbered/Jan.-May 2003. (Anarchist Intervention, POB 30577, 10033 Athens, Greece; web site: [www.geocities.com/an\\_pare](http://www.geocities.com/an_pare)) is back to a 12-page, English-language news bulletin chronicling the steady stream of Greek anarchist news and actions, especially against the Iraq invasion and "massacre that took place there." Send a contribution for a sample copy. [JM]



#### ANARCHIST STUDIES

Vol. 12, #1/2004 (Lawrence and Wishart Ltd, 99a Wallis Rd., London, E9 5LN, England) is a well-produced, academically-oriented (refereed) biannual 96-page journal covering a wide range of historical, theoretical and cultural anarchist themes. This issue includes L. Susan Brown's "Looking back and moving forward: The radical humanism of The Politics of Individualism" (giving an account of her discomfiture at the often nasty reception her book was given ten years ago by Murray Bookchin and others), an extensive analysis by Robert Graham aptly titled "Reinventing Hierarchy: The political theory of social ecology," and an even longer essay by Saul Newman titled "Anarchism, Marxism and the

Bonapartist state" (arguing that the anarchist theorization the autonomous state grows from Marx's analysis of the Bonapartist state). Also included is a debate on the meaning and relevance of essays on anarchism and the anti-globalization movement appearing in a recent issue. Interesting journal if you can afford it. Subscriptions remain a bit steep at £20/year (2 issues); student subscriptions are £15/year. [JM]

#### ASR

##### Anarcho-Syndicalist Review

#38/Winter & #39/Summer 2004 (POB 2824, Champaign, IL 61825) is a 56-page quarterly promoting anarchist unionism. The Winter issue includes Jon Bekken on "Fighting over Time: Work without end, or time to live?" The Summer issue includes a good editorial by Mike Long titled "Anarchists for Kerry?" and updates on Argentina, Kosovo and Venezuela. Also included is survey of the dismal media coverage of worker's issues by Jon Bekken and a sometimes funny screed from Jeff Stein on "Engineering and Anarchism." This is the magazine for those who believe there is still some life in the ideal of anarchist industrial unions. Subscriptions are \$15/4 issues. [JM]

#### COMMUNICATING VESSELS

#14/July-Aug. 2004 (POB 1124, Madison, WI 53701-1124) is a nicely-done, 50-page zine, this time featuring a very good, lengthy, unattributed essay titled "Caught between Two Worlds: Russia, Spain, Modernization and Today's World," dealing with the tenuous relevance of Russian and Spanish revolutionary histories to our increasingly dehumanized modern world. Recommended. Donations encouraged. [JM]

#### COVERT ACTION QUARTERLY

#77/Fall 2004 (C.A. Publications, 1500 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Suite 732, Washington, DC 20005; web site: [www.covertactionquarterly.org](http://www.covertactionquarterly.org)) is a 48-page magazine detailing the sordid history of US policies and the behind-the-scenes actions taken by some of the more secretive elements of US government and corporate organizations. This issue includes a look at the Israeli connection in the war against Iraq, Wayne Madsen looks at the possibility that the North Korean explosion last April may have been a



## REVIEWS

### Alternative Press Magazines

botched assassination attempt with high-level US involvement, William Blum revisits the bombing of PanAm 103, and the article "Access of Evil: Genocide in Chiapas" examines the continuing efforts by transnational corporations, in collaboration with the Mexican and US governments, to crush the Zapatista rebellion. Subscriptions are \$22/year (4 issues). [TW]

#### DEMOCRACY & NATURE:

##### The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy

Vol.9,#3/Nov. 2003 (editorial: 20 Woodberry Way, London N12 0HG, UK; ordering: Carfax Publishing, Taylor & Francis Ltd, Cust Services Dept, 47 Runway Rdm Suite G, Levittown, PA 19057-4700; web site: [www.democracynature.org](http://www.democracynature.org)) is a 200-page academic journal (formerly Society and Nature) which seeks to create a radically democratic synthesis of traditions of socialist (economic), political and ecological democracy, placing it on the borderline of anarchist theory shared with anti-state environmentalist, directly democratic and libertarian socialist positions. This issue features a reassessment of editor Takis Fotopoulos' "Inclusive Democracy Project-Six Years On," probably the most sophisticated of the numerous conceptions of libertarian democracy promoted these days, with contributions from a number of scholars. Unfortunately, with this issue the journal is temporarily ceasing publication for two years while searching for a new editor and a new publisher. Look for this in the nearest university library unless you're independently wealthy. Subscriptions have climbed to \$76/year or £47/year. [JM]

#### FIFTH ESTATE

Vol.39,#2 (365)/Summer 2004 (POB 201016, Ferndale, MI 48220; e-mail: [fifthestate@pumpkinhollow.net](mailto:fifthestate@pumpkinhollow.net) & web site: [www.fifthestate.org](http://www.fifthestate.org)) is a consistent quarterly these days, with a 64-page magazine format this time. This is a fairly high-quality "Reconsidering Primitivism" issue, featuring Derrick Jensen's meditation "Beyond Backward and Forward: On Civilization, Sustainability and the Future," Richard Heinberg on "Green Anarchism and Oil Depletion: How close is the collapse?" and Peter Lamborn Wilson on "Domestication." Also in the issue is a partial

reprint of David Watson's old "Swamp Fever" criticism of militant primitivism, along with a meandering introduction longer than the reprint and a whole page of endnotes in which he continues his confused attacks against *Anarchy* magazine and *Alternative Press Review* for the sin of not backing the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia, which he thought was just swell. Sad. Cover price \$3; yearly subscription \$10 (4 issues). [JM]

#### FREEDOM

##### Anarchist News & Views

Vol.64,#20/Oct. 25 2003 through Vol.65,#17/Sept. 5, 2004 (84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX, England; web site: [www.ecn.org/freedom](http://www.ecn.org/freedom)) is a very long-running,

recently redesigned and much-improved, 8-page fortnightly tabloid of anarchist news and comment covering international, as well as British, social struggles. These issues include an attempt in the October 25th issue to describe the origins of the militant Greek anarchist movement, the start in the same issue of a short-lived "Green and Black Bulletin" page of "anarcho-primitivist news and views from the Wildfire Collective" (this lasted only for a few issues), a quick assessment of whether Britain should become a full member of the European Union in the May 15th issue, and a one-sided appraisal of Bakunin's revolutionary ideas by Iain McKay in the May 29th issue. Also included in each issue are some consistently interesting book and media reviews. If you

## christian angst by terry everton

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## REVIEWS

### Alternative Press Magazines

haven't followed this newssheet before now is as good a time as any to subscribe! North American subscriptions are still £22/year (24 issues). [JM]

#### GREEN ANARCHY

##### An Anti-Civilization Journal of Theory and Action

#16/Winter 2004 (POB 11331, Eugene OR, 97440; email: [collective@greenanarchy.org](mailto:collective@greenanarchy.org)) is now an impressive 78-page magazine with full-color covers, exhibiting a high-degree of layout skill. But it also cries out: "So many tiny words, so little white-space relief!" This issue features: Sky Hiatt on "Nostalgia," Bob Black's "Theses on Anarchism after Post-Modernism," John Zerzan on "Patriarchy, Civilization and the Origins of Gender," Kevin Tucker on "The Witch and the Wildness," and René Riesel on "Biotechnology: Public and Private." Also included are lots of news and "rewilding"/skill pieces. This magazine has made great leaps from its earlier issues, and has to be recommended highly. Sample copies are \$4 in the U.S., \$5-7 elsewhere; U.S. subscriptions are \$15/5 issues. [JM]

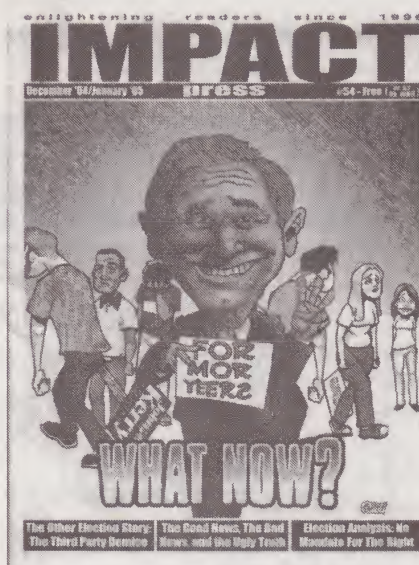
#### IMPACT PRESS

#54/Dec '04-Jan '05 (PMB 361, 10151 University Blvd, Orlando, FL 32817) is a 64-page progressive newsprint magazine with a pro-animal rights perspective. This issue features a slew of articles and commentary analyzing the 2004 US elections, including the demise of a third party presence in the US. Animal rights activist Dr. Steven Best recounts his personal experience regarding British government attempts to ban him from entering the country to attend the International Animal Rights Conference, and Heather Moore ranks the ten worst animal abusers of 2004. Send \$2 for a sample copy. [TW]

#### NEWS FROM NOWHERE

#4/Dec. 2003 & #5/Spring 2004 (POB 10384, Eugene, OR 97440; e-mail: [thenewsfromnowhere@yahoo.com](mailto:thenewsfromnowhere@yahoo.com)) is a very promising, 8-page tabloid advocating militant eco-anarchist perspectives and actions. The December issue is especially good, including "The War is Over if We want It," a reprint of Errico Malatesta on "Mutual Aid," Wolfi Landstreicher's excellent "Deciding for Oneself:

Democracy, Consensus, Unanimity, and Anarchist Practice," Chris Wilson on "Anarchism: Against Capitalism, Against Socialism," an unattributed "Anarchafeminist Manifesto," and "Reimagining Space and Culture in the Resistance to Global Capital" by Chris Kortright. The Spring issue includes an update on Haiti, "The Productive Play Equation" placing Nonviolent Communication at the service of avoiding work, an old Emma Goldman essay on "Marriage and Love," Steve Booth's complaining denunciation of "The Primitivist Illusion," a somewhat whiny



manifesto from RAMBL (Revolutionary Anarchist Mom and Baby League), and a worthwhile critique of "Liberal Human Rights: Morality against Revolutionary Redistribution." Copies are available free "in person or for postage." Send a first class stamp or two. [JM]

#### NORTHEASTERN ANARCHIST

##### A Magazine of Class Struggle Theory and Practice

#9/Summer-Fall 2004 (POB 230685, Boston, MA 02123) is a 48-page NEFAC magazine now with glossy, color covers, which should help it get a little more attention on newsstands, although it can still be heavy-going on the inside. This issue includes a decent piece on the U.S. cannon fodder industry by Stephen "Flint" Arthur, Wayne Price on "The Anarchist Case against Electoralism," Tom Wetzel

defending Michael Albert's Participatory Economics scheme, and Adam Weaver providing a dreary view of "Building a Revolutionary Movement: Why Anarchist-Communist Organization?," while the sad history of "Italy and Platform" is recounted by Nestor McNab. The cover price is \$4; subscriptions are \$15/4 issues. [JM]

#### SOCIAL ANARCHISM

##### A Journal of Theory and Practice

#35/Winter 2003-04 & #36/Spring 2004 (Atlantic Center for Research and Education, 2473 Maryland Ave., Baltimore, MD 21218; web site: [www.socialanarchism.org](http://www.socialanarchism.org); e-mail: [editors@socialanarchism.org](mailto:editors@socialanarchism.org)) is a 96-page biannual journal. The Winter issue features an interesting essay titled "An Ethnography of Nowhere: Notes Towards a Re-envisioning of Utopian Thinking" by Stephen Shukaitis and an at times amusing piece by Brian Morris on "Telling lies for a better world?" The Spring issue focusses on the Middle East with a bizarre essay by Bill Templer titled "The Impasse in Israel/Palestine: Moving forward toward a Cooperative Commonwealth" (in which he argues for "a kind of Jewish-Palestinian Zapatismo," among other strange things), a historical account of "The Anarchists, Zionism, and the Birth of the State of Israel" by Sylvain Boulouque, and a quick analysis of technology by Prole Cat in "The Anarchist Case for Moderation." Single copies are \$6.00; subscriptions \$20/4 issues or \$32/4 issues (overseas). [JM]

#### THE @ WORD

#6/Nov.-Dec. 2003 (Somewhere in Seattle; e-mail: [info@theaword.net](mailto:info@theaword.net); web site: [www.theaword.net](http://www.theaword.net)) is a fairly new, high-energy, 24-page zine with some colorful covers. The issue starts out with a standard put-down of white leftist irrelevance for "communities of color," and includes a burnout story by Brady McGarry, a criticism of education as the path to revolution by Chris Pollina, and an interview with Derrick Jensen on "Revolution, Sustainability & Civilization." There seems to be a fair amount of white angst in these pages. But that's balanced out by a lot of attitude and slang. The cover price is \$2. No subscription information provided. [JM]



## REVIEWS

### Alternative Press DVD

#### The End of Suburbia — Oil Depletion and the Collapse of the American Dream

(The Electric Wallpaper Co., c/o VisionTV, 80 Bond Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5B 1X2, 87 minute DVD, web site: [www.endofsuburbia.com](http://www.endofsuburbia.com), US\$27.75/C\$34.50).

A simple fact of life is that any system based on the use of nonrenewable resources is unsustainable. Despite all the warnings that we are headed for an ecological and environmental perfect storm, many Americans are oblivious to the flashing red light on the earth's fuel gauge. Many feel the "American way of life" is an entitlement that operates outside the laws of nature. At the Earth Summit in 1992, George H.W. Bush forcefully declared, "The American way of life is not negotiable." That way of life requires a highly disproportionate use of the world's nonrenewable resources. While only containing 4% of the world population, the United States consumes 25% of the world's oil. The centerpiece of that way of life is suburbia. And massive amounts of nonrenewable fuels are required to maintain the project of suburbia.

The suburban lifestyle is considered by many Americans to be an accepted and normal way of life. But is this sprawling and energy-intensive lifestyle sustainable? Few people are aware of how their lives are dependent on cheap and abundant energy. It suggests many Americans may be in for a rude awakening. In a fascinating new documentary, *The End of Suburbia — Oil Depletion and the Collapse of the American Dream*, the central question is this: Does the suburban way of life have a future? The answer is a resounding no.

Despite the serious subject matter the documentary is actually quite engaging and entertaining. Not only is it informative for those already familiar with the issues; it's also quite accessible and enlightening for the uninitiated. It serves as great introduction and a real eye-opener for people who are largely unfamiliar with the

topic of energy depletion and the impact it will have on their lives and communities.

The *End of Suburbia* marshals an impressive array of evidence that the growing energy demands of the "American dream" in suburbia will eclipse our planet's ability to provide it. The suburban way of life will soon become economically and ecologically impossible to maintain. We will see the inevitable collapse of the suburban lifestyle and the end of the American Dream. And it will happen within our lifetimes.

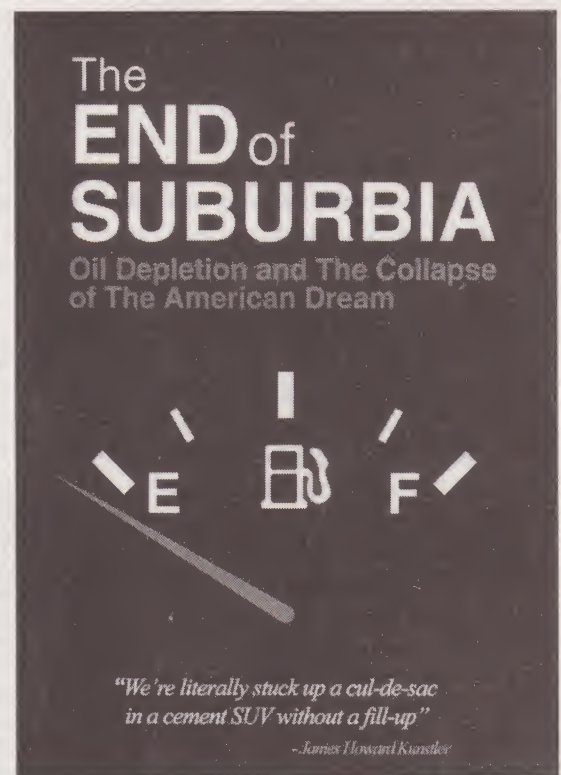
How bad will it get? Put it this way. We may be looking at the mother of all downsizings.

For those who are familiar with the issues of peak oil and resource depletion, the usual suspects are here. They include Richard Heinberg, Michael Klare, Matthew Simmons, Michael C. Ruppert, Julian Darley, Dr. Colin Campbell, and Kenneth Deffeyes, among others. All of these individuals provide valuable information and insights concerning the coming energy crisis and the impact it will have on the lives of people on the North American continent.

But the standout star of the film is author and critic of contemporary culture, James Howard Kunstler. The sometimes humorous and always entertaining presence of Kunstler is prominent throughout the documentary—and for good reason. He grabs your attention. He explains in refreshingly blunt, easy-to-comprehend language that suburbia is screwed.

Kunstler calls the project of suburbia "the greatest misallocation of resources in the history of the world" and says "America has squandered its wealth in a living arrangement that has no future." You immediately get the idea he's not exactly a fan of suburbia.

How and why did this happen? The *End of Suburbia* outlines the seemingly rational and logical impulse behind the project of suburbia, tracing the beginnings



to the late 19th century when it was originally envisioned as an alternative to city life and an escape from the hideous aspects of industrialism. Modern suburbia traces its beginnings to just after World War II when the suburban project took off with a massive housing boom and the increasing dominance of the automotive industry. This car-centered suburban project ended up being the template for the massive development of the second half of the 20th century. That project was wrapped up, packaged, and sold to the American public as "The American Dream."

*The End of Suburbia* points out that the rise of the suburbs was made possible by abundant and cheap oil. It allowed for a lifestyle where millions of people can live many miles away from where they work and where they shop for food and necessities. But the voracious and expanding energy needs of our industrial society with its ever-expanding consumer culture and increasingly affluent suburban lifestyles are brushing up against the disturbing reality of finite energy resources.



## UNCLASSIFIED ADS

The biggest impact will be felt by those who currently live in the sprawling suburbs of North America. *The End of Suburbia* also makes clear that the effects of energy depletion go way beyond paying more at the pump. It will come down to the question of how you will feed yourself and your family.

Although the documentary mostly avoids the gloom and doom of some peak oil theorists, it does occasionally touch on some of the darker aspects of fossil fuel depletion, notably how it will impact food production. The film briefly looks at the energy-intensive process needed to bring food to supermarkets. Our modern industrial agriculture relies heavily on petroleum for pesticides and natural gas for fertilizer, not to mention the energy used in planting, growing, harvesting, irrigating, packaging, processing and transporting the food.

*The End of Suburbia* shows how the suburban way of life has become normalized and reveals the enormous effort currently put forth to maintain it. On a foreign policy level, it means continued aggressive attempts to secure access to the remaining reserves of oil on the planet in order to prop up and maintain this lifestyle. But the film makes it crystal clear that suburban living has very poor prospects for the future. Any attempt to maintain it will be futile. Kunstler asserts that the suburbs will become "the slums of the future."

What about alternative sources of energy? *The End of Suburbia* points out that no combination of alternative fuels can run and maintain our current system as it is now. What about hydrogen, you ask? The film does a great job of shooting down the hysterical applause for hydrogen. The idea of a hydrogen economy is mostly fantasy. Hydrogen is not a form of energy. It is a form of energy storage. It takes more energy to make hydrogen than you actually get from hydrogen. Same with ethanol. It is a net energy loser. It takes more gasoline to create and fertilize the corn and convert it to alcohol than you get from burning it. The documentary explores the potential alternatives and comes to the conclusion there is no combination of any alternatives that will allow us to continue consuming the way we do.

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What is in our future? The consensus from the experts in *The End of Suburbia* is the suburbs will not survive the end of cheap and easily accessible oil and natural gas. The massive downscaling of America—voluntary or involuntary—will be the trend of the future.

Kunstler argues we can expect to see "globalization" to reverse itself in the 21st century and he says one of the most important tasks will be to prepare for a very different way of life. The imminent decline of industrial civilization means we'll have to organize human communities in a much different fashion from the completely

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unsustainable, highly-centralized, earth-destroying, globalized system we have now. There will need to be a move to much smaller, human-scale, localized and decentralized systems that can sustain themselves within their own landbase.

While *The End of Suburbia* doesn't provide any easy answers, it does provide a much needed look at the reality of the situation many in North America will be facing in the coming years. For that reason, *The End of Suburbia* is one of the most important must-see documentaries of the year. — **Thomas Wheeler**

**The book review section for Alternative Press Review will return starting with the upcoming Summer 2005 issue. Send review material to: PO Box 6245, Arlington, VA 22206.**



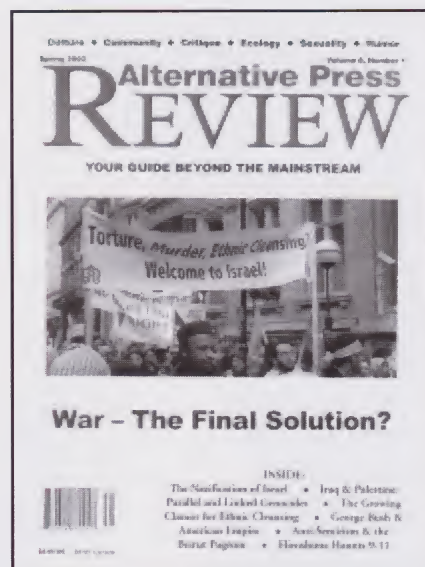
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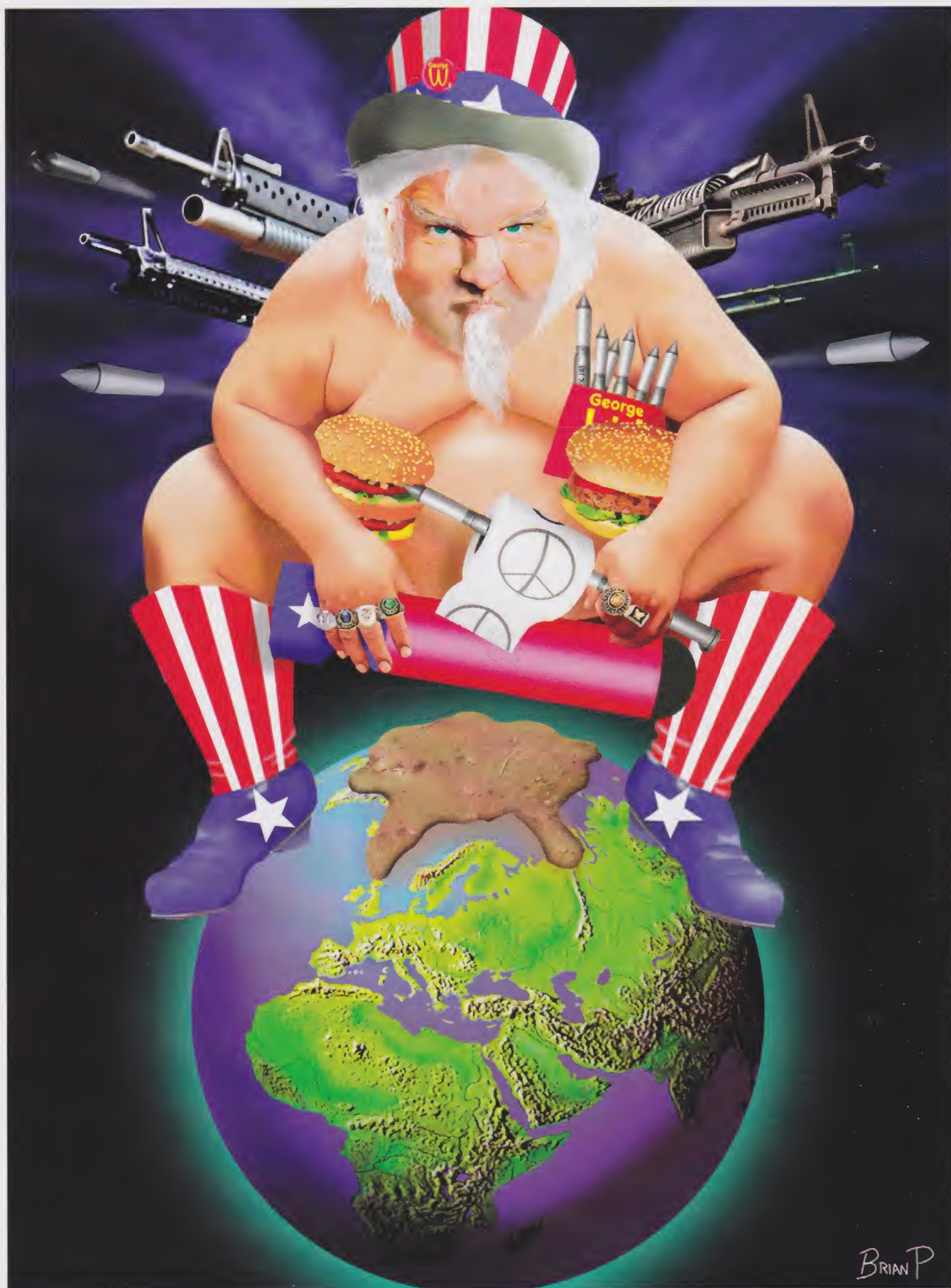
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